BEHIND BARS

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Introduction

It was late and I was preparing to call it a day. Outside my office at the department of Psychiatry I heard some loud voices and the rhythmic clatter of boots. Soon a number of uniformed men presented a handcuffed, bearded man. His clothes were clean but crumpled as compared to the over-starched attire of his guards. His shoulders were drooping and he barely moved. He looked at me as if I was standing miles away.

I greeted him and offered a chair. He returned my greetings with a faint smile. It was this smile which revealed his age. He was a young man.

After certain formalities I was alone with him. A good look at him and I knew. Or so I thought. His face was still emotionless and he complained of fever and bodyache-nothing else. Maulana Nomani was admitted in our ward.

This encounter was one of many with political prisoners, who manage to reach us. Detailed interviews with them provided me with a little window through which I could see and feel the agony and inhuman and degrading treatment thousands of people are undergoing. Only because they dare to differ, to dissent or to agitate for change.

Our clinical teaching trains us to interact with a patient's symptoms, to arrive at a diagnosis and prescribe a set of pills. The psychiatrist, through a mental state examination, may claim to be more appreciative of the feelings of the patient. However, even after Maulana Naumani's prolonged stay with us I did not know much about him. I was to learn much more, years after the Maulana's release and after reading his Urdu book Jo Mujh Par Guzri.

His graphic description and a tremendous capacity to remember so many names and relate to their ordeals is remarkable. His drooping shoulders were carrying a heavier burden than I realised. The experience was an education for me. I used this new insight later, in the treatment of other prisoners of conscience specially, in the case of Rahila Tiwana, a student leader.

Earlier, there was no diagnostic category for such silent sufferers. Their symptoms would be labelled as malingering, hysteria and sometime, if generous, it could be termed Depressive Disorder.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a new diagnostic entity which the highly conservative medical profession has finally recognised. Though it is yet to be taught and popularised, this is a significant step forward because it facilitates the development of management techniques and long-term prognosis. The immediate wounds heal but the deeper scars in the personality, if unattended, remain raw for a long time.

What has not yet been accepted by the medical profession, and less so by society, is the damage done by solitary confinement. In human beings, objective evidence of damage caused by sensory deprivation has been provided by EEG studies where decrease in the range of alpha waves have been demonstrated. Other physiological studies have revealed disturbance in the excretion of major neurotransmitters, the biochemical "switches" in the brain.

The narration in Maulana Nomani's prison memoir has all the classically documented means of torture: torture through innovated means of beating, sensory deprivation (blindfolded for days and weeks, being moved from place to place without a clue, deprivation of light, noise or social contact), prolonged sleep deprivation and excessive and constant light, sexual assault, including rape in lockup and special torture cells, iron bar fetters of varying sizes and weights, chain across mouth and forced milk enema to hunger strikers etc. etc. Such acts of torture are ascribed in this book to hundreds of individuals identified by their names and their "crimes" with great authenticity. The availability of narcotics to the obliging prisoners and hardship to those who cannot meet the demands of their captors is well-known in our prisons and the evidence provided was never contradicted.

The humiliation and the breaking of the spirit of strong and dedicated youths are the most painful aspects of the written and unwritten codes practised in our prisons. Behind Bar (Jo Mujh Par Guzri) is incontrovertible testimony to the brutality of the prison system. The radical and humane changes in the Jail Manual is much too overdue.

The decision to translate Maulana Naumani's book into English goes back to 23 November 1989 when Dr. Inge Kemp Genefke, from (International Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture) Copenhagen was visiting Pakistan. She was at our place in the evening along with Dr. Mehboob Mehdi of Voice Against Torture and Dr. M. Arif of Pakistan Association for Mental Health. Rafiq Safi and his wife Nausheen, also dropped in (Rafiq Safi Munshi features prominently in the Maulana's book). It was after dinner that Dr. Ginefke asked for a copy of Maulana Nomani's book. But it was in Urdu. That evening we toyed with the idea of getting this book translated.

The idea was given an impetus in December 1992 when Dr. Fisher from the British Medical Association attended the Bienniale Conference of the Pakis-

tan Medical Association in Karachi. She presented me with a remarkable book "Medicine Betrayed" published by the British Medical Association.

This book is an authoritative and informative resource material on torture and the involvement of physicians the world over. It includes recommendations for medical care of prisoners, treatment of hunger strikers, strengthening of medical ethics, doctors and the death penalty, whipping or amputation and for the doctors working in the Armed Forces.

The Bienniale Conference also reminded us of a resolution of the Pakistan Medical Association, we steered, way back in 1983. It reads: "The PMA, Karachi, is extremely disturbed at the continued use of corporal punishment of flogging. This is not only inhuman and against the dignity of man, but this can cause physical damage and irreversible psychological trauma, specially in youngpeople. It is known that such punishment may activate latent diseases like tuberculosis and precipitate cardiovascular accidents beside permanently damaging the personality of the victim. We call upon the Government not to involve the medical profession in the process of flogging and stop such punishment on humanitarian and medical grounds." By this time the medical group of Amnesty International was also functioning actively. Another group has set up an organisation called Pakistan Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War. It is satisfying to note that the medical profession is getting more conscious of its social responsibilities.

I am grateful to Mr. Imran Aslam for his excellent and free translation, capturing the spirit of the original text in Urdu. It also has the approval of Maulana Nomani.

Prof. S. Haroon Ahmed, M.D.
President, Pakistan Association for Mental Health

September 12, 1993

Translator's Note

Javed Nomani's book "Jo Mujh Par Guzri" opened up chapters of my mind that I had closed, more in shame than in fear. My own encounter with the brutal instruments of state coercion now lie buried in the debris of the unwritten history of the struggle in Balochistan. Perhaps, one day I will have the courage and the perspective to relive the horror and degradation of dark cells, sensory deprivation and physical torture.

Nomani's work allowed me to exorcise many ghosts. It stirred me and made me aware that the barricades are never lonely. I hope that this rendering into English has retained the passion and the matter-of-fact style employed by Javed Nomani. He is a brave man.

His greatest defence is the truth. I hope this book will make the tyrants cringe as they see their faces in the distorted mirror of history. Books like these are meant to prevent a future where the midnight knock upon the door is accepted as a norm.

--- IMRAN ASLAM

Foreword

Undoubtedly the book by Maulana Jawaid Nomani is the first document of its kind in Pakistan. The subject has been dealt with previously, but in a poetic and literary style, where reality was concealed in metaphors and similis. The most distinctive feature of Maulana's book is authenticity. All events and characters are identified, and one gets glimpses of the language used in jails.

It was difficult to decide about the publication of the book. Some political circles were not in favour of such compilations, arguing that it spreads fear and disappointment among political workers. Therefore, for reasons of strategy it is better to avoid narration of oppression. On the other hand, it was considered to be an inspiration for political workers, and necessary to strip off the transgression of governmental institutes.

Dear Readers, you are well aware of our aims and objects and now it is upto you to decide. Anyhow the legends of tyranny continue and gain momentum in our country.

ZAFAR ARIF

From original Urdu Edition

Torture Calls

February 1983 four a.m. A Lufthansa DC 10 throbs at Karachi Airport, in transit. Port of embarkation - Frankfurt. Final destination the exotic Far East. Fairly normal, fairly routine. However, the plane was signaled onto a parking bay which was far away from the terminal. The sinister motive was not apparent to the passengers who watched the elaborate paraphernalia of the airport ground support system come alive. There was a certain restlessness amongst the passengers who wished to disembark. The doors of the plane seemed oblivious to their impatience. I peered out of one of the windows. All I could see were shadows. As my eyes became more accustomed to the enveloping darkness, I realised that the plane was surrounded by a detachment of plain clothes men. I realised at once that I was their prisoner. They had me trapped.

I had flown the distance from Frankfurt with a peculiar premonition. Thoughts of arrest, imprisonment and torture preyed on my mind incessantly. Fortunately these thoughts had reinforced my resolve to cope with such an eventuality. Mentally and physically, I was prepared for the days and nights of incarceration that would follow the opening of an aircraft door.

The door finally floated open. An air stair moved into place with characteristic imprecision. We had waited for half an hour. The shadows I had seen, now boarded the plane. They had eyes which scrutinised the passengers. The captain of the aircraft led the search. I was told by one of my tormentors to stand up. My luggage and passport was already in the possession of the captain, courtesy the German police. I was led out, and put into a jeep. Somewhere along the line my hands were cuffed. I asked them why I had been arrested and why was I being treated like a common criminal. I spoke legalese. Where are the warrants for my arrest? Can I see my counsel?

An obese, fat lump of corruption spoke in a voice that was harsh and intimidating. His tone was accentuated by the surfeit of fat that had made

his body its home. 'You will find out in a few minutes. So shut up!' Ten minutes went by. The police officer who seemed to be in charge came alongwith a sepoy who was carrying my luggage. They got into the jeep. The officer rode with the driver. We were now a party of eight. Police cars to the front of us, police cars to the rear of us belching sirens. We sped away.

I was being driven through Karachi, a city which had shaped my dreams. A city where I had spent my youth. I had studied here and had learnt to question the given. Now as familiar landmarks, buildings, trees and alleys whipped past me, I was overwhelmed. I had come home after a long time, spent watching exiled sunsets. I wanted to prostrate myself and kiss the soil that I was forced to abandon. The city slept. A few cars drove past, oblivious of the drama that had overtaken my life. The police jeep was now nearing the office of the crime branch Sindh. It arrived. I was hauled out and taken to an office. It belonged to the head clerk of the crime branch. I was told to sit. I sat.

A plain-clothes man stood close to me, holding a chain which was attached to my handcuffs. Three policemen kept guard outside the office. I sat motionless for almost three hours, taking in the terror in this monotony. I was given a cup of tea and some dry buns. Breakfast over, I was marched into another room. I glanced at the name and designation of my inquisition officer 'AIG Crime Branch, Sardar Abdul Aziz'.

I was now face to face with him. He was in familiar company. The officer who had 'escorted' me on my journey from freedom to imprisonment sat next to him. His name and rank remained a mystery. This was a terrifying thought. I suppressed it. I was later told that he was DSP Jaffery of the Crime Branch.

Sardar Aziz motioned me to sit on a chair. He asked me my name. I went along with the charade and gave him my name. Once my identity was established, suddenly he yelled at me. 'Why did you visit India, Afghanistan and Russia?' Why did you make subversive speeches against the government?" I told him that it was my mission to expose the bloody features of the Zia regime and those speeches were merely expressions of my belief. He started to threaten me and in keeping with images gleaned from a C grade film villain he stroked his moustache menacingly. I was dismissed and taken back to the now overly familiar surroundings - head clerk Nazir's office.

Sleep now raised its head. I told the clerk that I wanted to sleep and would be grateful if I could be given a room to sleep in. "The DSP Sahib will arrange it. He will put you to sleep". Even in my sleepy state, I was able to discern something evil in this seemingly harmless statement. Every time I nodded off, the police man would jangle his chain and jerk at my hand-cuffs.

I would wake up in horror. This game went on till I heard the Azaan for Zuhr (afternoon) prayers. I expressed my desire to say my prayers. They scoffed at my request. "You have said enough prayers, Maulana".

Just then lunch was served. The banquet comprised of a plate of dal (pulses) and two chapattis. I was led, after the luncheon interval to DSP Jaffery's office. My inquisitors had multiplied. Five gentlemen of our law enforcement agency were sitting there awaiting my entry. I was asked to sit and my shadow, the policeman who had held my handcuffs was told to leave the room. I was now alone. The interrogation was re-opened.

These officers seemed to have a fairly accurate idea of my speeches abroad. The more senior amongst them wanted to know about my connections with Al-Zulfiqar. 'What is your rank in this organisation?' 'Have you had meetings with Shahnawaz and Murtaza Bhutto?' 'Who are the other members of Al-Zulfiqar?' 'Who are the patrons of this organisation both abroad and in Pakistan?' 'Who murdered Zahur-Ilahi and Zahur Bhopali?,' 'Tell us about the people involved in the bomb blasts at Karachi and Lahore airports' 'We suggest that you co-operate with us or else we will use other methods'.

The phone rang. One of the officers picked up the phone and exchanged a few pleasantries. He then barked into the receiver "We'll break his bloody legs. We'll kill him like a dog and leave him to rot on the streets. Yes, yes. We have been able to extract information from the most stubborn bastards. We'll make him talk. He will sing like a canary when we are through with him". He put down the phone with deliberate menace and turned to me meaningfully. The phone sequence was obviously scripted into the interrogation scene for my benefit.

I told them that I had no links with Al-Zulfiqar. I had never met Mr. Bhutto's sons. I was not aware of their activities nor did I have any knowledge of their inner cell. One of the officers said "So why did you go to Kabul?" I said that as far as I knew visiting Kabul was not a crime. I had used my own passport to travel to Kabul. Ironically Afghanistan tops the list of countries we are allowed to visit as per our passport. It takes alphabetical precedence over others!

"Your speeches have been printed in the Indian press. Why have you made anti-Pakistan speeches in an enemy country?"

I told them that I had addressed press conferences and given interviews in India on the political situation in Pakistan. "I have been critical of General Zia and his outlaw regime. I believe that this government is unconstitutional and illegal. Zia is a usurper. Please do not confuse the issue. Criticism of the Government is not the same as treason against the state. I am a patriot. Pakistan is my country. My fore-fathers shed their blood to make this

homeland. I cannot question the fundamentals of the state. You will not find one single word against the state in my speeches. If you identify this state with the generals, that is your problem not mine."

'Chashmu' adopted a paternalistic tone. "Yar, Maulana, forget it. Just tell us what your rank is in Al-Zulfiqar. Don't waste our time and your life by being stubborn."

I stuck to my first statement because this was true and no amount of intimidation and brow beating would weaken my resolve to speak the truth.

The sepoy was summoned and I was taken back to base - head clerk Nazir of the 'Crime Branch'. I had reconciled to another monotonous wait when I was shifted to another room-the staff room. Plain-clothesmen were lolling around indulging in plain speaking. They gossiped amongst themselves and taunted me.

My mind was now cluttered with thoughts about my family. It dawned on me that my arrest was not public knowledge. I had no clue as to how long the interrogation would last and how I was to be treated. The Moazzan called for Maghrib prayers and my request to pray was ignored, again. I was very angry. What sort of people were these? How dare they keep me from performing my religious duties?

An hour later I was conducted to yet another room. Now six pairs of police eyes greeted me. I sat in front of this tiring squad. Inspector Nizamuddin of the crime branch arrived to extend the list of interrogators.

Q: You are a member of Al-Zulfiqar?

A: No.

He turned to the others.

Inspector; 'Fix the Maulana.'

A free for all ensued. Suddenly I was kicked, slapped, thumped and boxed. It rained blows and insults for some five interminable minutes. I felt dizzy with pain. Blood was oozing from my mouth. My face was swollen.

Q: You are a member of Al-Zulfiqar?

A: No.

Inspector Nizamuddin Siddiqui coolly told the other policemen to hang me upside down. This they did with practised efficiency. The pain was unbearable. If words could describe the agony, they would be banished from any humane dictionary. Thoughts of suicide entered my brain. Anything to avoid the pain, I thought. But suicide is a sin, said my slightly unconscious conscience.

I was left to hang like a bat for about ten minutes. As if to take my pain to levels of excruciating agony, they beat me with 'lathis' and shoes. I must have passed out.

I came to. Looked around and oriented myself. I was lying on a stinking blanket. My handcuffs were fastened to a bench. I was in a room - yes. It was another room. The door was shut and there was no light. It was obviously night. Or so I assumed. I was completely disoriented. My body ached. The pain motivated my eyes to liberate a few tears.

At seven the next morning I was taken to a toilet. I relieved myself and took the opportunity to perform ablution. I sipped some water. My throat was parched and my body drained.

Once again I was taken to the head clerk's office. This was obviously the staging post. The perfunctory tea and stale buns were again offered. I was then led to the interrogation centre.

Inspector Nizamuddin was now joined by Inspector Farid Khan. A stenographer was also present. Would he be able to transcribe the terror?

Inspector Nizamuddin asked me routine questions relating to my age, place of birth etc. He also enquired about the size of my family and my educational qualifications. He then moved to my political leanings and ideological inclination. He wrote everything down and then gave it to the stenographer who gave his scrawl an official respectability. This exercise took some three hours. I was then sent back to Nazir's room to wait.

At four the wait ended. I was put into a jeep and with full police escort (reserved it seemed for VIPS and criminals exclusively) driven off. Inspector Nizamuddin was in our jeep. I was not going to shake him off easily. The jeep pulled into the Civil Lines Thana where I was shored unceremoniously into their lock-up. It was freezing cold and very damp. The rains had played havoc. I sat on an old blanket, in pain. I felt feverish. I pulled the blanket over me. The cool floor was freezing. I had to keep moving to keep my circulation running. Two plain-clothesmen and a sentry did the rounds outside the cell. They seemed amused at my predicament. These low life were treating me like a prisoner of war. Their hatred for me was almost personal.

Somehow, the night passed, just barely. I was taken to the Crime Branch Office at dawn. It was a Friday - I think. Nizamuddin reopened his enquiry. The same questions. The same answers.

Q : What are your views on the Russian invasion of Afghanistan?

He would intersperse his queries with obnoxious abuse, sometimes he would slap me.

This ruthless and tiresome harangue continued till the azaan for Juma prayers intervened. Then back to the lock-up.

I was served in my cell. The menu was unchanging. Two chapatis and a plastic cup full of foul smelling dal. I dipped the chapati in water and ate-out barely. I was exhausted. I stretched out on my blanket and slept.

Just after midnight I woke to the jangle of the cell door. Three tall and hefty men entered ominously. One of them asked me my name and my father's name. Having established my identity, he asked me why I had been arrested. I told them that I was clueless. They left.

I was taken to the Crime Branch office at seven the next morning. Same tea - same buns. I complained of pain and told the policemen that I was feverish. I demanded to see a doctor. Nazir went to see DSP Jaffery and returned smiling, 'Don't worry Maulana. Everything will be sorted out.' I said that I was in pain. I was worried. He told me that I was being sent to a better place 'today'. I hoped that I would be sent to jail.

At 10 a.m. I was put into a jeep and had to endure the presence of my chief tormentor Nizamuddin for the length of the journey. I read the board of the office we had just entered. DMLA (Deputy Martial Law Administrator) Karachi. The police had presented me to the DMLA and taken my remand.

The DMLA - Maj. General Afzal was red as a beetroot, in anger. His colour matched his allegations - 'You are a bloody red. A Communist. We'll teach you a lesson.' I said that I was neither a traitor nor a Communist. I was only an opponent of his regime. The DMLA ordered my immediate removal from his sight. I was taken to the crime branch and put in yet another room. The sepoys whispered amongst themselves and occasionally glanced at me. I was beginning to read such gestures well. I did not have a persecution complex - my immediate reality confirmed my worst fears.

Half an hour later three men who I had never seen before barged in. One of them blindfolded me with a green scarf. My hands were cuffed. They walked me out. The powerblind leading the blind into a jeep and off. Thirty minutes later we arrived at our destination. We marched. I was searched. My eyesight was suddenly restored. I was in a dark dungeon like cell - 6" by 8" - old and dreary. The walls were cracked. For furniture the ever present blanket which I discovered through something resembling braille exercise. I peered out of the tiny bars that embellished the door. A sentry in military uniform guarded my solitary confinement. I wished my guard. He reciprocated my gesture with slovenly grace. I was encouraged. I asked him where I was. He told me to shut up. I lay back on my blanket.

I was served my food. Vegetable and meat. A veritable feast. This had to be a cantonment. The army ate better than their civilian counterparts. I wanted to go to the bathroom. I was taken. I took the opportunity to survey my surroundings. All I saw were cells. They were unoccupied. Thank God. The commode was of a western mode. Had to be a cantonment, I thought. The guard stayed outside as I answered the call of nature with difficulty. I was not used to this style of toilet. The guards grew impatient at my delay

and started to bang on my door. Half done I was led back to the gloom of my dungeon.

Fifteen minutes later four men entered, blind folded and cuffed me and led me some 50 yards. I was made to sit on a chair and my blindfold removed. I was in a reception area. A man entered. He told the guard to usher in the 'Sahib'. I was led to a room where three men sat waiting. One familiar face from Crime Branch. Two were unknown.

Q: Maulana, why have you been arrested?

A: You know better

Q: Because of your connection with Al-Zulfiqar, perhaps? Tell us about it. If you tell us all we shall be good to you. If you refuse to tell us the truth we will force out of you. You are at our mercy. You can rot here for years. Tell us when did you join Al-Zulfiqar?

A: I am a member of the JUI. I am not a member of Al-Zulfiqar nor do I know anything about it.

Q: Did not Lala Asad and Ilyas Siddiqui visit your mosque?

A: I am the Pesh Imam of the mosque. Hundreds of people come here. It is not my place to chose who should be in my congregation. I do not know of their political affiliations.

Q: Why did you go to Afghanistan?

The same questions repeated ad nauseum. When I responded with passion they would tell me not to make political speeches.

Q: Did you supply arms to students involved in riots at the Karachi University?

Since when are you a Communist?

How do you know the Afghan Counsel General? Who did you meet in Kabul? How much did the Indians pay you?

I told them that they were talking rubbish. Their allegations were baseless and all the charges were concocted. I said that the nature of my arrest and the torture I went through were hallmarks of the regime. I opposed and confirmed my worst fears of their fascist techniques.

Suddenly it was tea time. The tone was softer as we sipped tea. The questions were still the same. One of them enquired about my conditions. I told them in detail. I was told that if I cooperated I could be home by the following evening. A charpoy was ordered along with a pillow and some bedding. Soften me up a bit, I thought. My resolve to resist somehow grew stronger. I was escorted back. Soon my stark cell was furnished. It looked more habitable but somehow reeked of bribery.

Any information is welcome when you are in solitary. I asked my guard his name. He refused to divulge his identity although he said that he was from Jhelum. He also told me that the office I had visited earlier was

presided over by a Brig. Malik. My inquisitiveness frightened him and he went off.

My mind wandered off too. I thought about the office. It was expensively furnished with costly carpets. Three telephones, a walkie-talkie and a wireless-set made it an effective communications centre. I resolved to talk about my political beliefs and avoid a mental and physical breakdown. They would not buy my conscience. The bribe of the charpoy would not soften my resolve. I fell asleep that night in relative luxury.

I woke to a plate of halwa, puri and choley. My sense of timing was now dependent on meals. Lunch was served and I told the sentry to please get me a doctor as my body was aching. He ignored my request.

An hour later three people came into my cell. One of them was a doctor. He asked me to strip. I dithered but eventually gave in to his persuasive bedside manner. My lower back and thighs were in great pain. After a painful inspection, he gave me some capsules and left me. I lay around restlessly. The cell was beginning to get claustrophobic. Even the short visits to the toilet were a major respite.

After dinner, three men entered my cell. I was blindfolded and led to the reception area. When I entered the office I was confronted by five officers. Brig. Malik asked me if I had thought about their queries. I repeated my previous answers. The Brig. wanted to know about Lala Asad and Ilyas Siddiqui. I said I did not have anything new to add to my previous answers. He was inflamed. He started ranting and accusing me of treachery. He said that he was now going to use other methods to get a confession out of me. I was led out to another room where I was soon joined by Brig. Malik and four others. He was still agitated. He gave me what he called the last warning. I told him that I was an activist and that I believed that Martial Law was a curse.

While I was defending myself with words, a person entered with the instruments of torture. He held a cane and a rope in his hand. Brig. Malik turned to his subordinate, a Major Butt and said, "He is all yours. Do your worst." Major Butt looked at me and said "If you have any concern for your life tell us all."

I told him that I had already been beaten. "This had not loosened my tongue. You are perpetrating crimes under the cover of darkness. God is still my witness." I became emotional. I accused the military of breaking the country, of committing atrocities in Balochistan and the murder of innocent Pathan peasants. I catalogued their crimes one after the other. Suppression of truth, the flogging, the abuse of religion, and the corruption of justice. The major listened and then ordered the other men to start the torture.

'Take off your shirt'

I refused. They tore my shirt to shreds and started to whip me and beat me with a cane. My skin was torn apart. Blood splattered the walls and floors. I passed out. The major wanted me in my senses. He forced some water through my parched lips. As soon as I regained consciousness, the questioning began. I muttered incoherently that I have nothing to add. The major said "Grade - II".

The executioners grabbed hold of my hair and beard and flung me all over the place. This was an Islamic regime. I am a religious scholar. My beard was being plucked. Ironies never cease. I was now totally nude and spreadeagled on the floor. An army jawan moved forward with a lit cigarette. He extinguished it on my penis. Another got hold of my pubic hair and began to tear it out of its roots. I cannot say if the physical pain was greater or the humiliation. I screamed.

"Your bloody father will speak" said the major.

Another glass of water. Only this time I was allocated a sip. They marched out leaving me in excruciating pain. A naked bulb of a 1000 watts glared at my naked person. I felt like a trapped, and wounded animal. My back was bleeding profusely. Pain pushed me into a peculiar sleep.

The next morning I was given a fresh shalwar kameez suit. I refused to wear this outfit. I was dressed forcibly, blindfolded and led away to my cell. The charpoy was gone. The fruit of attempted bribery are perishable. Two 1000 watt bulbs stayed on at all times. Sleep was impossible in the glare. I refused breakfast. I was warned that my refusal would ensure harsh treatment. I said that I would rather die than eat their food. He left. I refused lunch and dinner. My wounds were still fresh. Flies and ants made an appearance.

After midnight Major Butt also appeared. He reiterated his resolve to make me confess all. He also warned me not to try a hunger-strike. Then he left. I drank some water. My limp body felt better. Death is a natural effect of life. Why not die at their hands. At least I shall be honoured as a shaheed (martyr).

I wanted to know where I was. The sentry divulged that I was a prisoner of the ISI Psychological Warfare Unit. He was from Faisalabad. I had made a friend. He spoke to me. I now waited for him to make his rounds. I asked him how long people generally spend here. He said that this place was a cut-de-sac. 'Nobody can help you here. Nobody. Prisoners have languished here for six and seven years. There are some others who have been here for over eight months". He went away.

The next morning I continued with my fast and was transferred to another cell, which was pitch dark. I needed darkness. The glare of the naked bulb was driving me insane. This cell had an attached toilet. This was a curse. It

smelt horribly as there was no door. I languished in this odious room for three days. I was blindfolded and led to yet another office. Two new officers sat waiting for their prey. They were the good cops to Major Butt's bad cop routine.

They were very apologetic about Major Butt's harsh treatment of my person. "He is a tyrant who does not distinguish between classes of human beings". They asked me to confess in a very polite manner. I was not taken in by their facade of decency. I lashed out at the system they had designed and supported. I abused the institution of the politicised army.

The polite one then ordered me to be more selective in my condemnation. I told him not to philosophise. He then began the questioning. They repeated the same queries over and over again, I told them that they were barking up the wrong tree. I was not a professional orator. I was a follower of Shaikh Al-Hind and Hazrat Hussain Ahmed Madani.

Q: Why are you in politics?

A: I am the son of a poor man. Politics is the monopoly of the bureaucracy, the generals, the feudals and industrialists. We, the downtroddens are in the majority. We have the right to rule.

Q: But only a handful of your class are in politics?

A: It is a question of consciousness and sensitivity.

I was summarily dismissed.

The next day to another office. Here sat Major Niazi and a stenographer. The routine questions regarding my identity were asked and answered. Then back to the same old questions and answers. I was sent to another room. A Captain Saeed said, "I am your enquiry officer. I have to get some answers. You are wasting our time. We will not release you till we get what we want from you."

I told him that I indulged in open politics."I am sure you have transcripts of all my speeches against Zia. They were broadcast on radio and beamed across the world".

Captain Saeed was not interested in my speeches. He wanted answers on my alleged connection with Al-Zulfiqar. He summoned the torturers who started to beat me up again.

This was a sophisticated torture chamber. An electric chair for administering shocks, was their latest acquisition. I was put on it. He pressed the button off and on and my body was convulsed with shocks. He came close and whispered, 'Speak!' I was close to tears. I swore that I had no idea about Al- Zulfiqar. I was now shivering. This was followed by more shock treatment and I passed out.

My body turned yellow. I was dragged semi-conscious to my cell.

Two days later I was produced before Capt. Saeed. I told him I was a religious scholar and a political activist. Why was I being tortured? "If you want me to confess to the murder of Zahur-Illahi and Bhopali, I will do so. But it is not the truth".

I was once again taken into the torture chamber. The very sight of the instruments of torture was enough to cause a shiver to run through my body. I was suddenly very pale. No wonder Gallileo recanted on being shown the instruments of torture. The captain told me to stand in the room and instructed the guards to make sure that I did not sit down. I stood for about 12 hours. When my legs would give in. I was whipped ferociously. My feet were swollen. I was given nothing to eat or drink during my ordeal. Finally when I was allowed to sit, I was in a strange semi conscious state.

The captain ordered a glass of glucose and water for me. I felt a bit better. I was given a pen and a few sheets of papers. On one sheet were listed the same old questions. I was told to write out any confession. He then left me to my conscience.

I could not write. I was too exhausted. Food was served and I was unable to lift the chapati off the plate. I handed over the blank sheets to the captain.

Back to the cell. Four days went by without any incident. The silence was ominous and I was filled with foreboding. Every little sound frightened me. I lay in the dark reciting verses from the Quran. My body trembled with fear. Memory is a reservoir of horror.

On the fifth day I was blindfolded and bundled into a jeep. When they removed my blindfold I found myself at the Civil Lines Thana. I cannot describe the feeling of joy that enveloped me. A civil lock-up is always relatively better than the stark military dungeon. I could see the sky, I could hear the birds. I felt that I was free. The mind was still capable of relativity.

I was put into a lock-up. The place was filed with an unholy stench. I wanted a sweeper to come and clean up. My request was answered by a guard.

"Give me five rupees and I will get you a bhangi (sweeper)."

I had to smile at his request. Fifteen days of torture and now this.

I just lay back and took my fate as it came. My body aches. My beard and hair are in a terrible state. When I think of my parents I weep like a child. The walls are full of slogans and defiant verses. 'Hide your faces in these dungeons of hate. The blood of the innocent will seal your fate'.

The next day I am taken to the crime branch. My wounds are treated. I am given some pain killers.

Four days later I am taken to see the SHO Zarre Khan. The SHO gets me a cup of tea and leaves me with three investigators. They ask me some questions and write down my answers.

The next day I am driven to the DMLA's office. I know that they are here to take my remand. The night is not over.

Karachi Central Jail

After taking my remand, I am taken by jeep via Kashmir Road, to the Karachi Central Jail. I am presented to an officer. I notice two crowns on his apulets. He notes my name down and orders a sepoy to take me into the jail. I am thoroughly searched and shoved into an inner courtyard. I am confronted by a host of prisoners. They are in white and have caps on their heads. I am made to sit in a place reserved for new-comers. This is known, in jail jargon as 'Char Roti'. A hawaldar presides over the scene. Three convicts sat around reading and writing. Some other prisoners are sweeping the courtyard and some are doing 'laipa' (washing the walls with muddy water. This is supposed to seal cracks but is a form of humiliation). A newer convict arrives. He is told to sweep the floor. He refuses. An indignant hawaldar retaliates with his 'lathi'. The prisoner's eyes fill with tears. He begins sweeping. A few minutes later he is escorted by another prisoner who takes him aside and has a chat with him. I realise that this was all pre-planned. Break a man and then remake him in your own image. I was getting impatient and tired of sitting on the concrete bench. I asked the hawaldar to take me to my cell. He waved his swagger stick at me.

'Sufi you are in jail not at a wedding. Keep sitting till you are told what to do next'.

I was feeling hungry. I sit and begin to doze off. At the sound of the afternoon azaan. I stand up and decide to take a stroll. I notice an old policeman. I walk up to him. I tell him my predicament. I ask him his name and rank. He tells me that he is Maqbool Shah, the Subedar of the jail and asks me about my case. I tell him what I know. The Subedar takes me to the Deputy Superintendent. I plead my case. The DS, whose name I later discover is Rahim Shaikh, tells me to hold my tongue and orders the Subedar to take me back to the bench where I must sit, indefinitely.

Ten minutes later a prisoner wearing a red cap escorts me to Barrack No:22 B Class. This is a special barrack for political prisoners. Any new prisoner is a curiosity. The news of my arrival had spread like wild- fire. I was greeted as an old comrade. One of the prisoners, Aftab Daud, was an

acquaintance from the other life. He was behind bars for two years already. He introduces me to the others. He then takes me to Barrack No. 23. I am viewed with awe by the prisoners. Aftab asks me to bathe and change my clothes before dinner.

I am almost delirious. I go around asking the other prisoners their names and the reason for their being here. They tell me. I forget just as fast. My mind is losing its capacity to remember. I feel like a sieve.

Aftab brings me some hot water for a bath. This is my first bath in over a month. I eat and promptly fall asleep.

I am awakened by the entry of a sentry who is there to do a head count before locking up. I say my prayers. The prisoners now gather and want to know about the nature of my arrest and subsequent events. I fill them in about my torture. I now feel that I can retain information. I ask Aftab to introduce me to the prisoners.

Aftab: "There are seventeen prisoners in the barracks including yourself. Rafiq Memon, Saleem Ansari, Ehsan Sherpao, and Mohsin Raza are here from 1979. The first two have been sentenced to 25 years each by a special military court. The latter two have 10 years sentences of hard labour. Nasser Baluch and Rasul Baksh Lahuti and Essa Baluch are here since 1981. They are convicted for their alleged role in the PIA hijacking case. Two others, Malik Ayub and Saifullah Khalid are being tried these days by a military tribunal for the same crime. Ramzan Mughal, Rukhsar Qureshi, Wali Mohammad and Ashraf Shaikh are here since 1982. They were convicted in the Lala Asad case. Najmi Alam, Mustafa Baluch, Hanif Patel and myself are here because of some conspiracy case".

I complain of pain and upon request show my cell mates the signs of torture on my waist. They are shocked. Some wounds are still raw. Rafiq Memon says that they will try and get me treatment, the following day. Nasser Baluch sensibly intervenes and says that I should be made to rest.

I wake, say my prayers and join the others for breakfast. Saleem Ansari spreads the 'Dastarkhan'. We eat dry bread and sip insipid tea.

I want to know about communication with the outside world. I am told that it is difficult. If any visitor does get through, a message would be sent to my brother concerning my whereabouts. I get permission to go to the hospital. The courtyard is being swept by my fellow prisoners. There are no doctors or compounders in the hospital. A prisoners who seems to hang around the hospital acts as a paramedic and treats my wounds. He prescribes some tablets. Aftab and Patel want me to meet some more prisoners. We go towards Ward No.17.

I meet Agha Ashfaq who embraces me. I am pleased to note that he has some furniture in his cell and even a fan. The privileges of a 'B' class prisoners. Agha Ashfaq's story:

"I was a sub-inspector in the CID, stationed in Sukkur. Rukhsar Qureshi's father was a friend of mine. Rukhsar came to my house in 1981 and said that the police were after him. I hid him from the police, but he was arrested. I was picked up and removed from service. I was interrogated for over a month and tortured".

We went into Ward No.18. Professor Jamal Naqvi, Irshad Rao and Parvez Ali Shah were the prominent inmates of this ward. We are introduced. They are visibly upset to see me in these surroundings. Parvez Ali Shah has been in prison since 1979. He was interrogated for over two months and was brutally tortured by both the civil and military agencies. I asked him to describe the torture.

"They hung me upside down and whipped me. They pulled my hair, they scorched my flesh, they deprived me of sleep for days on end. I have yet to appear before any court of law".

I turned to Professor Jamal Naqvi with similar queries.

"Nazir Abbasi and myself were picked up from a flat in North Nazimabad in 1980. The ISI arrested us. Shaheed Abbasi and I were taken blindfolded by jeep to an old building in a deserted area. Our escort went inside. I looked at Nazir who blinked at me meaningfully, and said, 'Comrade don't lose courage. This may be the last time we see each other'. Nazir was taken away and I was locked up in a cell". I know from his description that I had been in the same cell.

He continued:

"One day I noticed a great deal of activity in the cantonment. I was to find out much later that this was the day they murdered Nazir Abbasi. Nazir's body was washed by Satter Edhi. He told us that his body was covered with bruises and severe wounds. It seems that his body was dragged. I was kept in solitary confinement for three months. They would not let me sleep and would keep me standing for hours". Jamal Naqvi was charged along with Jam Saqi. He was very ill.

Irshad Rao was treated in a similar fashion as well. He was not allowed to see his family for over a year.

We had tea and moved on to ward No.21 where Malik Ayub, Amar Lal, Kamal Warsi and Dr. Jabbar Khattak were held. We had a brief meeting.

I am taken on a tour of my new domain after lunch by Saleem Ansari. We discuss meals and I express a desire to join the system that has been set up by the prisoners. I am happy to pay Rs.100 a month for some extra food.

We walk around and see the area where prisoners undergoing trial are lodged. We then see the women's prison and the condemned prisoners cells. We see the barracks where the Muslim League's Haroon Ahmed and his followers are being kept. There is a special prison for foreigners as well. A whistle is heard. Our stroll is over.

I was interested in Rukhsar Qureshi's case. I met him. He told me that his wife Rubina was also incarcerated in the same prison. I can only see her once a month. I was kept in the Municipality Investigation Centre for two weeks where I was tortured by the police and military. You can see the scars on my body. There are still signs of cigarette burns. He shows me his body and I am shocked.

Wali Mohammad Sehto who was Rukhsar's erstwhile landlord told me that he was kept in a flat near Liaquatabad police station for a fortnight. He was tied upside down and beaten till he was unconscious, several times. The investigation team was led by DSP Mumtaz Burney. Rubina Qureshi was in the adjoining room. Her screams were soul destroying. She was interrogated by male officers. Wali said that he could hear the sound of the beatings administered to the lady, distinctly. Rukhsar then told me in subdued anger and shame that the butchers burnt her vagina with cigarette butts. Sometimes they would strip her naked and make her stand outside her room. Rubina was raped and was made pregnant by her interrogators. They then force-fed her tablets and medicines to abort the child of torture.

Ashraf Sheikh was a student of Sindh University. He was studying for his Masters degree. He was tortured under the supervision of AIG crime Sardar Abdul Aziz. As a result of his ordeal he still suffered from dizzy spells.

I slept well that night.

At 10.00 a.m. the next morning I received some good news. I have a visitor from the outside world. I stroll across to the visitors room with Najmi Alam. There is nobody there. We go across to the area enclosed by wire netting and peer outside. I see my younger brother. He asks me how I am in a bewildered manner. He is obviously disturbed. We exchange pleasantries and news about my family is relayed to me. Zaheer (my brother) gives me Rs. 200/-. He is visibly upset. I suppose any person visiting a prison or a police station undergoes a similar reaction.

I walk back passing the now familiar sights of prisoners doing their degrading chores. I am quite upset. Ijaz Dalmia tells me that the jail authorities extract Rs. 200 from each prisoner. Those who do not or cannot pay are treated brutally.

"One day we shall show you the Bund Ward and the 'Chakar'. You cannot imagine man's inhumanity towards his fellow beings till you have seem these places".

Ijaz is a former President of the PSF (Peolples Student Federation) Karachi. He is here on concocted charges, relating to the Bhopali murder case. He was interrogated for over four months. The soles of his feet were torn by incessant beatings. He showed me one of his feet. The skin had been sipped off. He was also hung upside down and beaten unconscious. The IG Sindh Dilshad Najamuddin was personally in charge of investigation.

The same evening Nasser Baluch told me his story.

"I was arrested in March 1981. I was interrogated by the FIU (Military Intelligence). I was occasionally stripped naked and flogged with leather whip and canes. They burnt my penis with cigarettes. They beat Lahuti so badly that he dislocated his shoulder.

Lahuti, was a gravedigger. He had grown up daughters and was the only earning member of his family. "I was accused of hiding Saleemullah alias Tipu's arms in a grave".

Rafiq Memon told us how his tragedy had enveloped his family. His younger brother died in an accident and his father had lost his eye-sight. Rafiq wanted me to talk to the Jail Superintendent about the prisoners demands :

1. Weekly visits
2. Better rations
3. Stop the 'laipa'

I slept thinking about these demands. I awoke to great activity. The ward was being cleaned. All the beddings were placed in the verandah. The J.S. was making his rounds. This was 13th March 1983. The prisoners formed a queue and stood chattering. At 8.00 a.m. a whistle was heard and a hush descended on the ward. The minions arrived for a pre inspection and gave us fresh orders regarding cleanliness.

The Jail Superintendent does his rounds every Sunday. He visits the Jail factory, the hospital and the B wards in that order. He arrived. He was escorted by a full drill. He made a few perfunctory inquiries from the prisoners. He then turned to me and enquired of his subordinate the nature of the charges against me.

"He is charged in a conspiracy case," came the stoic reply. I spoke to the J.S. about our demands. He was quite upset at my forthright manner. He rejected two of our demands and agreed to weekly visits.

On 28th March an event took place, which still causes my hair to stand on end. I witnessed with Mohsin Raza the manner in which our gaolers treat any sign of dissent. Some prisoners had protested against the harsh working

conditions in the factory and had organised a one day token strike. Their defiance was answered by brutal beatings. The prisoners were chained and wore bar fetters. These weigh between 5-10 kilos. They were dragged almost unconscious to the punishment cells which are known as Bund Wards. Who says that prison is any different from conditions in the outside world. The difference is in degree.

It was 4th of April. All the prisoners decided to commemorate Bhutto Shaheed's death anniversary in a befitting manner. We organised a Quran Khawani in our barracks. I was pleasantly surprised to see other prisoners join in as well. We followed the Quran Khawani with a political meeting. This was addressed by Parvez Ali Shah, Amar Lal, Mustafa Baluch, Saleem Ansari and myself. We distributed sweets amongst the prisoners. This was made possible through a secret fund that we had got together.

At the end of April a rumour began circulating which later was found to be true. Saleem Mughal who was charged in the famous Bus Case and who was one of the prisoners released on demand of PIA hijackers, had been arrested and was being held at our prison. Parvez Ali Shah went to see him. He said that Mughal had lost his mental balance. "He tore at his hair, hurled filthy abuses at all and refused to recognise me." Mughal was sent down to the mental asylum for treatment. We intervened and had him released from the mad house. He was now lodged with us. He was arrested in 1981 and was kept at the infamous Lahore Fort dungeon for eight months. He could not talk of his ordeal. He would have fits of weeping. One night he attacked Ijaz Dalmia with a knife. The knife broke. He stabbed him again. Dalmia was badly injured. The other prisoners restrained him and held him down.

The next morning we informed Parvez Ali Shah. Shah Sahib came over with a doctor, Maula Bakhsh who was arrested for harbouring the infamous dacoit, Islamuddin Changa. The wound was quite deep. We decided to inform the authorities. Saleem Mughal, in the meantime attacked Parvez Ali Shah. We decided that he had to be kept separate from us. We escorted Saleem Mughal to the 'Charya Ward' (asylum).

This was my first visit inside the 'Chakar' which houses the mental asylum. Here all prisoners are treated like animals. I saw over fifty insane prisoners, young and old wandering about aimlessly. Some were totally nude, others were dressed in strange attire. Most of them were unkept and in a disgusting state. No one seems to know how long these prisoners have been here. Time is the sanctuary of the sane. These people were probably sane when they got here.

There is a section in the asylum which is marked 'Quarantine'. This is where a new inmate is kept and examined. This is a glorified torture

chamber. It is grossly over crowded and the prisoners are humiliated on an hourly basis. Some are made to crouch in that ridiculous posture known as 'Murgha', others are deprived of sleep. The insane are made to do heavy manual labour and often spend their nights sweeping the other barracks. It costs a hefty bribe to get yourself out of 'Quarantine'. Pay up or be tortured is the unspoken dictum.

Shia-Sunni riots broke out in Karachi in March 1983. The army arrested a hundred odd people and some children. They were all locked up in our prison. They were sentenced to 10-15 stripes each by a military court. They were flogged in the evening. Hawaldar Hashim Khan, Hawaldar Ghulam Rasul and Sepoy Pervez (who was later shot) administered the stripes. It was said that the children were so petrified that they wet and soiled their trousers. The major and colonel who supervised the floggings were unmoved.

These prisoners were shifted to Hyderabad, Sukkur and Khairpur after their ordeal.

We had one VIP prisoner as well. He was Maj. Shabbir who was imprisoned under the Shariah Law. The Major had all the privileges of a free man because the prison authorities were told by the DMLA to lay off him.

In July the notorious dacoits Sharif Gadani and Miroo Khosa were brought to Karachi Jail from Khairpur. They wore bar fetters and were kept in the condemned prisoners cell, known as 'Phansi Ghaat'.

I was developing quite a reputation of being a trouble maker. The J.S. was wary of my constant demands. He retaliated by withdrawing some of my privileges. I was locked up earlier than the appointed hour. They do not brook the slightest dissent in Jail.

Jails are the breeding grounds of addiction. Nousha, the infamous "history sheeter" openly sold hashish, opium and heroin to prisoners seeking escape from harsh reality.

The jail authorities were obviously in cahoots with him to everyone's financial advantage. Rukhsar Qureshi was developing into a heroin addict. He was helped along by Lahuti. His state was the best advertisement against heroin. He would massage Lahuti's body all night just for one heroin cigarette. Lahuti would then get upset. Rukhsar depended on Lahuti. He would grovel and plead and then begin to massage the man. I would feel depressed to see the disintegration of Rukhsar. What a sorry waste of such a promising young man. On one occasion he was searched and some heroin was recovered on his person. He was shut in solitary and beaten. The JS wanted Rs.1,000 to release him. We pleaded with him. Finally after great

persuasion we got Rukhsar back. Fortunately his stint in the lock-up cured him of his addiction. He was a changed man.

The prison hospital is another racket. Prisoners who are admitted here are treated callously. Nothing is done without bribes. Medicines are removed from the pharmacy and taken away by the doctors to their private clinics. The food is atrocious and the caterer seems to specialise in pawning off rotten items to the patients. There are patients in the TB ward who have been here for decades. They seem to be oblivious to the breakthrough in medical science quite sometime back.

Till August 1983 I have known of countless prisoners who have been flogged. We are not allowed to witness the floggings but can hear the sound of canes on bare skin and the piercing screams that follow. I know that Hanif Khoso was flogged at a time when he was suffering from high temperature. The jail doctor was unsympathetic.

One night Ehsan Sherpao was in agony. His kidneys were hurting. The doctor was around but never showed up. He had to be sedated to relieve his pain. There have been cases of patients dying from infections due to unsterilised injections. There was no concept of the sanctity of the hospital. It had degenerated into a cesspool of sin and extreme callousness.

On the 2nd August 1983, Hawaldar Hashim Khan informed me that I was to be released. I distributed my belongings amongst the prisoners and said my farewells. Later I learnt that I was merely being shifted to another place. Rafiq Memon, Saleem Ansari, Shahid Ali Rana and myself were handcuffed and put into the jail van. We were taken to the station. As soon as we got off at Cantt Station I raised slogans, "General, Colonel, Murdabad, MRD (Movement for Restoration of Democracy) Zindabad". A crowd gathered. This was the beginning of the MRD movement that would send waves of fear through the regime's heart. We saw this at the Cantt Station. We had 15 policemen armed to the teeth with sophisticated weapons, escorting us to Sukkur. We were handcuffed to the seats and arrived at Sukkur Station at 8.00 a.m. A new city. A new jail.

Sukkur Jail

What a welcome! The four of us were made to sit in pairs and in a peculiar crouching position with heads down. This is a humiliating experience. I resented being handcuffed to my comrade in arms. We were told to crouch. Whenever I lifted my head I was beaten with a lathhi. The policemen were in a ferocious mood. They kicked and boxed us till we were semi-conscious. Then they put me into bar-fetters. I could barely walk. The distance to the political ward was about a furlong. I tried to walk with the newly placed impediment to my mobility but could not. This annoyed my escort who reacted to my faltering steps with violence. My shins and ankles were badly bruised.

I am in a cell. There is no blanket here. There are ants in great multitudes. They have removed even my 'cummerband' (the loin string which holds the troussers). A hawaldar sits outside my cell. I am being treated like a hardened criminal. And this is the political ward.

Half an hour later a jailor and a subedar enter my cell. They point to the brackets on the ceiling of the cell and tell me that these are expressly meant to hang us upside down. They threaten me and begin to use abusive and foul language. I begin to protest and am told to sit down quietly. They leave as menacingly as they had arrived.

A few children and some youngsters came to look at me. They came only after the hawaldar had left for a while. They gave me some water and expressed sympathy at my state. I asked them where they had come from. They said they were from Burma and Bengal. They fled like shadows at day break when the footsteps of the hawaldar were heard. I was given some food. The menu consisted of my staple diet two chapatis and dal. I said my prayers with great difficulty and tried to lie down. The bar fetters did not allow me to stetch. Just as sleep invaded my eyelids, I was awakened and told to crouch. The subedar was on his rounds. When he left I lay down again.

I woke at dinner time and ate some food. They gave me a blanket, which was stinking to high heaven. It is extremely hot and I have mosquitoes for

company. I cannot sleep. All sorts of insects and ants come in to visit me. They too are emerging from their nests because of the heat. To top it all the naked bulb glares at me. There were suddenly a lot of lizards on the wall. They fight with each other and drop to the floor. It was a terrible night. I fought off my fatigue and the mosquitoes and slept for two hours. I was relieved when the sun peered in.

I am served tea with mollases instead of sugar and a dry bread. Also a broom to clean my cell. This is an impossible task when you are chained and fettered. I tell the hawaldar so. He threatens me. His threat is carried out. A few minutes later he came back with some men who attack me with lathis. I fall to the floor. They leave me lying there in a bloody mess.

A sweeper enters. He looks at me and tells me to keep faith. 'God is our witness'. He cleans the toilet and leaves. My Burmese and Bengali friends are cleaning the ward. I can barely see them. They came to see me later. They ask me about my case. I tell them. I then asked them about their predicament. The Burmese tell me that they are Muslims from Burma seeking asylum in an Islamic State. "We and our womenfolk have been imprisoned since two years." The Bengalis are illegal immigrants who came to Pakistan seeking employment.

I feel feverish. I want a doctor. The hawaldar disappears for an hour. He returns with a tablet.

'What's it for?' I ask.

"For all ailments," he says and laughs. I refuse to have this tablet. The same evening a compounder arrives and gives me some dispirin. My fever subsides after three days. When I feel better I am told to clean my cell. The JS is on his rounds again. I refuse to comply. The Burmese are pressed into action. I am told to crouch near the bars. The JS and his entourage arrive.

"Maulana", he says, "you are in Sukkur Jail. This is the domain of Inayatullah Durrani. If you create any mischief you will be buried alive here". He inquires why I am without 'Ara Beri'(Cross bars). His query is noted down.

"I am going to remove your fetters", he says imperiously, "If you do not behave you will be given maximum punishment". My fetters are removed. I feel I can breathe again.

I have a visitor! I am given back my shoes and 'cummerbund'. I am escorted by a jailor. I chat with him. His name is Choudhry Aslam. I ask him the subedar's name. He tells me it is Malik Ghulam Qadir. I am warned not to reveal anything about the conditions in the jail. My younger brother Abdul Qayum is waiting for me. He is thrilled to see me although the presence of guards is disconcerting. He knows that I have been tortured.

He can read it on my face. He tries to console me but he chokes. He tells me this is his third visit. On previous occasions he waited for me for hours, but in vain. The jailor tells us our time is over. We say our farewells, teary eyed and distraught. I walk away. All that is left of the visit is some fruit. The other provisions are confiscated by the wardens.

I am taken to the special barracks by a sepoy called Javan. I sit in a corner of these very large barracks and survey the scene. I see prisoners with fetters and handcuffs in various cells. One prisoner calls out 'Ya Ali Madad' and tells me to be a man and face the hardship. I feel a sudden empathy for all of suffering mankind. Javan tells us to shut up and breaks the momentary link.

I feel strange in these huge barracks. I say my prayers and lie down. I wake up to the sound of screams and bodies being thrashed. I look through the iron bars and see 20 odd policemen beating two prisoners with their lathis. They collapse with pain. The sepoys are supervised by Aslam, and Peeru Altaf and Subedar Ghulam Qadir. A compounder applies spirit to their wounds and the prisoners are thrown into their cells.

There is silence in the ward. No one dares even cough.

Finally two sentries come over to me and give me my two chapattis and some dal. I watch the prisoners in front of me. They are handcuffed and find it difficult to eat. Most of their limited diet lies scattered around them. Because they are hungry they eat with undignified haste. There are few other prisoners who are wearing steel reins in their mouths. These are removed and they are allowed to eat. Once they finish, the reins are put back on. They begin to vomit. Javan checks the locks picks up the leftovers and leaves us.

My neighbour who is in fetters introduces himself: "My name is Mohabbat Mari". He is one of Sindh's notorious dacoits. He is curious to know about my case. I trade information. He then introduces the rest of my jail mates to me. The occupant of the farthest cell is Karam Gadani, then Anwar Gadani, and then Anwar Ali Shah from Khairpur. The last named is a political prisoner.

Andal Kori and Meero Buleidi are also our jail mates as are Qaim Suhag and Rano Dharejo, Ghulam Qadir Mehar, Abdul Qadir Khokar, and Gilan Gilairi. A new sepoy arrived. He checked the locks and spread a sheet on which he lay down. He was lame. He was from the 'Lakha' caste and had been in the police service for 20 years. He tells me that I should behave myself or else I would also receive the same kind of treatment as the others. He feels that I am a good man. 'It shows in your face'. He also said that this was a 'hot' jail. This was a euphemism for a jail that meted out severe punishments to its prisoners.

I tell him that I have gone through the torture mill and am prepared for the worst.

I pace the barracks. The light bulb is on. It is very hot. All I have is a blanket, courtesy Javan. I lie down. It is soon time for prayers. Mohabbat Mani tells me that the prisoners recite Surah Yaseen together. He asks me to join. I do. Anwar Ali Shah recites the prayers. We all pray for a swift reprieve from this hell-hole.

Anwar Ali tells me that he knows Parvez Shah Gilani very well. He says that he has been implicated in a false case at the behest of the son of the Pir of Pagaro. The guard terminates our conversation.

I lie down on the blanket, irritated and upset. The mosquitoes begin their feast. They attack in bands. Soon it is dawn. I rise and say my prayers. My body is covered with evidence of last night's sustained attacks.

I stand by my door. A new sepoy has been deputed to stand guard. He does not want to have a chat. He tells me to shut up. A little later javan enters and a whistle starts to blow. He inspects the ward. He then distributes breakfast and tea amongst the prisoners. I eat and then lie down in a corner.

Today is 14th August. Independence day. The irony is not lost on me. Today the MRD plans to launch its struggle against the Zia dictatorship. I am unaware of the outside world.

Suddenly about ten armed policemen carrying riot shields enter the ward. They are led by Deputy Bhugio. I am asked to step outside my barrack. A policeman flings me to the ground. I am ruthlessly beaten with shoes. My head goes into a spin. I begin to scream. My skin has been ripped off. I am bleeding. A compounder rushes in and sprays my wounds with spirit. I am carried into my barrack. I lie there face down gathering my inner reserves. Later much later, I stand up. Qaim Suhag tells me to keep my chin up. You were not beaten as much as us'. He informs me that this is routine. He has had this treatment every day for the last six months.

The Sindhis are very brave people. They have an immense capacity to bear pain. They refuse to let out a scream. Yelling in pain is an insult to their courageousness.

Anwar Shah shows me his wounds. They are filled with pus. I could not eat that day. I lay down. I feel drowsy and feverish. I ask for a doctor. There is no response. Much later a compounder arrives dispenses some tablets and leaves. The tablets cannot assuage the pain of humiliation.

A new guard has been posted. His name is Mashooq Ali Rangar. He is from Rohtak. I tell him about my family background.

I ask him to send a telegram to my brother in Karachi. I will be very grateful. He tells me that he is unable to help me. "You are in the most

dangerous section of the jail. This is the place for condemned prisoners. We are searched many times for any such messages".

I lie down defeated. The condemned prisoners have their own form of greetings. They greet each other with 'Ya Ali Madad' and respond with 'Peer Mola Ali Madad'. Mohabbat Mani tells me that this jail is known for its vicious treatment to prisoners. He shows me his arm which was broken by lathi blows. He said that ever since Inayatullah Durani had taken over as Superintendent, conditions had deteriorated. He was brought here after Peeru Chandio and Nadir Jaskani escaped. A new I.G. Jails Noor Illahi Sheikh had also been posted since that jail break. He is known as 'Qahr' Illahi (wrath of God) by the inmates. He narrated stories of the type of people who ruled the jail. He told me how prisoners on hunger strike were beaten till they broke their strike.

I fell asleep. The mosquitoes conspired against a restful sleep. I woke said my prayers and began to doze off again. The little Hitler, Javan entered and threatened me with dire consequences for my sloth.

I was curious to know about the fate of my jail mates from Karachi. I did not think that Javan would be helpful in this regard. He was a sadist. He would always be present at the scene of torture.

Mashooq was of a different breed. I asked him about the jail. He told me it was built in 1941. He had been here for twelve years. He told me that I was in the same barrack in which Benazir Bhutto had been locked up two years ago. She was here for eight months. Before she was brought here, a carpet was laid on the floor and expensive chairs and sofas were placed all around the cell. She was given an airconditioner as well. Within half an hour of her arrival, Superintendent Abbasi went to see her. He informed her that all her facilities were being removed and that she was to be a C - Class prisoner. She lived in solitary confinement. She spent most of her time reading. She was a prisoner of the military and was guarded by army Jawans. Two guards were always posted outside her door. During her imprisonment in 1981, Rafiq Safi, Rasul Baksh Palejo and Fazil Rahu were her fellow inmates. Fazil Rahu was a friend of the superintendent. A message was sent through him to Benazir. Fazil Rahu said that he was disturbed to see her conditions and offered to send her some ice to cope with the heat. Benazir refused the offer on the grounds that the other prisoners did not have the same privileges.

Benazir wrote to her mother from this prison. She complained about the mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, bats and ants. However, she felt that Sukkur was closer to Larkana than Karachi, where her papa was buried. This fact gave her strength and solace.

He also told me about Rafiq Safi who was here since 1981. "He is a very strong prisoner. No one dares to raise his voice in front of him, not even the jailors".

Mashooq was very kind to me. He would fetch me cold water from the tap. This was a little piece of heaven in a constant hell.

He was also helpful to the other prisoners. He would smuggle in cigarettes for them. They were willing to pay through their noses for this facility. Apart from monetary gains, Mashooq would extract our constant attention and indulge in meaningless monologues.

I watch a march past. Durrani and his flunkeys are on an inspection tour. As he passes my cell he says loudly, "Has the Maulana come to his senses?" "Very soon, sir" The jailor says.

Javan is reprimanded. He is very upset. One day Javan brings in a small old man into the barracks. He is locked up with Mohabbat Mani. He abuses Javan soundly. Later he tells me that he is from Shikarpur. His name is Shosho Shah. He is a political prisoner. He addressed a meeting organised by the MRD in Shikarpur after which the people stormed a police lock-up.

I am interested to know about the MRD struggle. He tells me that it is going well. "We'll be out of here very soon. I am known to the Bhutto ladies. I was in the agitation against Mr. Bhutto's hanging. A comrade of mine was wounded during that struggle". He felt that Aftab Mirani would be the new Chief Minister of Sindh. His nephew Nasir Hussain had married Sanam Bhutto. Aftab Mirani was a former MPA from Shikarpur. He had courted arrest this time.

Karam Gadani and his nephew were here on trumped up charges. He told me that he was lodged in Sukkur District Jail. The Superintendent, Lal Mohammad Soomro was a pimp. He supplied criminals with prostitutes and young boys for their carnal needs. He could organise VCR's, whiskey and anything the prisoners desired for a price. He demanded Rs.50 from every prisoners as protection money. Those who refused were treated with malice. They were not presented in court and were tortured. "Because we raised our voice against his tyranny, we were transferred here. Here we were stripped naked and beaten unconscious. We have been in fetters since then."

Suddenly Javan and some policemen entered. They pulled Shosho Shah out of his cell. Hawaldar Mustafa Chandio grabbed him and flung him to the ground. Two policemen, Hanif Shaikh and Mehrab Chandio began beating him with staves. Jeevan kicked him. They then carried him back to his cell. We were paralysed with fear. Shosho Shah was unconscious. They turned their attention towards the others. Somehow I was spared. Shosho

Shah was weeping. He was a diminutive man. He was also old. It was a touching sight. He refused his food despite warnings from Javan. He refused his dinners as well and began to raise slogans against Zia and the jail authorities. A whistle was heard. Armed policemen entered our barracks. They dragged Shosho Shah out of his cell and kicked, slapped and beat him with their lathis. He continued with his slogans. Soon only a whimper was heard followed by silence. Shosho Shah seemed to prefer his unconscious state.

I asked Qaim Suhag about his life and about the nature of the charges against him. He was a member of Shareef Gadani's gang. He was sentenced to death by a special court after Martial Law was lifted in 1986. He was from Nawabshah. He was charged with numerous dacoities. He had a habit of dipping his fingers into the dal and stroking his mustaches in a gesture of masculinity. He was very vain. He had smuggled in a small mirror which was constantly reflecting his visage. I had not seen my face in a mirror for a long time. Perhaps we need a constant assurance that we exist. We seek solace in shadows.

He told me that he was transferred here from Khairpur jail in 1983. "I have been subjected to beatings ever since." He asked me about Shareef Gadani and Mero Khosa who had served time with me in Karachi. I told him that they were severely tortured. He was visibly moved.

Mohabbat Mani would turn philosophical. "We are criminals and dacoits. We accept that. But what about the army? Are they not criminals in uniform? They are bigger dacoits than us. They are butchers. They belong to that tribe that was involved in the firing at the Khana-e-Kaaba".

I was astonished at his political acumen and critical faculties. I noticed that the man was always reciting from the Quran. He had committed many verses to memory. He had large mustaches. He had 25 cases filed against him but seemed to have an inner peace. Their sedate state was in contrast to my own agitated state of mind.

Mohabbat Mani told me that over the last six months he had undergone many tribulations. He was housed in Hyderabad Central Jail for two years. He spent these years in a condemned prisoners cell awaiting death by hanging. He said that his spiritual strength derived from his faith in the Pir of Ranipur. The Pir helped him while he was in prison.

Nobody was allowed visitors in the 'Bund' ward. Mohabbat Mani had two visits and Ghulam Qadir Mehr had one. It is a ritual of the 'Bund ward' that whatever gifts received by any prisoner from the 'other world' are distributed. Muhabbat Mani received a lot of dates and fruit from his visitors. I was lucky to get ten dates, a banana and an apple. This was a rare treat. It was like manna from heaven. I rationed the dates over four days. It

was wonderful to round off a meal with some dessert. The dates made all the difference. Dessert from the desert!

One day at about eleven, two new prisoners were shown into my cell. One of them was wrapped in an 'ajrak' which he spread on the floor and we all sat on it. They were very thirsty. I gave them some water. Unfortunately they spoke no other language but Sindhi. It was difficult to communicate with them but it was marvellous to have some company in solitary confinement.

Half an hour elapsed. A contingent of armed guards arrived, dragged them out, stripped them and proceeded to flog them. They received 20 lashes each. The did not alter a single expression of pain. They walked back into the barrack and did some sit ups in order to prevent any clotting. I gave them some water. They lay down. I asked them their names. This was beyond their comprehension. One of them said he was Sikander Khaskheli. The other was Koora Wada. They were peasants and were now political prisoners. They had courted arrest during the MRD struggle. I told them about myself. They stood up and started talking to the other prisoners. They knew Qaim Suhag. They chatted away despite Javan's constant reprimand. The two had been brought here from Nawabshah Jail. They told me that the movement was in full swing. I wanted to know who was leading the MRD. They said Mustafa Jatoi's son Murtaza Jatoi. They kept talking but I was unable to follow everything they said.

I asked Anwar Shah to interpret. I was told that they were peasants from Halani in Nawabshah. They were involved in a protest against conditions in Nawabshah Jail. One prisoner died in the jail riot and many were injured. Army jawans took over the jail and beat the prisoners to a pulp. Many prisoners were maimed for life. They put down the revolt. The next day the rebel prisoners were shifted from Nawabshah. The MRD struggle was at its peak. The army was subjugating the Sindhis. The largest rally was in Hyderabad and Ranipur. The people were attacking police thanas, jails, and courts. The mobs had attacked Dadu Jail and freed the prisoners. In Khairpur a court had been sacked. Such exhilarating news lifted my spirits.

There were now three of us in my cell. The ward now had five political prisoners.

The next morning we woke to great activity. We thought the superintendent would make his rounds, however, he went off to the female jail. Sikander Khaskheli stroked his moustache and told me that a major had promised him freedom if he shaved off his whiskers. Khaskheli had refused. No wonder he was still imprisoned.

That night I turned to Ghani Haroon. Ghani recited from the Quran all day. He had a long beard. He was a notorious dacoit from upper Sindh. He escaped from Sukkur Jail along with Andal Kori and Mero Buleidi. His gang fellow was captured. However Ghani was killed in an encounter with the police. Andal Kori was a member of Shareef Gadani's gang. He was on the most wanted list for eight years. He escaped from jail in 1984.

Rano Dharejo and Ghulam Qadir Mehr were members of Paroo Chandio's gang. Rano had fled with Paroo when they broke the Sukkur Jail. He was only 20 years old. He was a student of Intermediate. He told me that he was forced into a life of crime by a wadera from Khairpur. Ghulam Qadir's mother had once come to visit him. She had brought him lots of fruit and a pair of shoes. Javan took possession of these gifts.

The next morning Shosho Shah swung into action. He returned his breakfast, and announced that he was going on a hunger strike. Javan threatened him but to no avail. The following day Subedar Ghulam Qadir came on the scene. He told Shosho Shah that if he persisted with his intention he would be beaten mercilessly. Shosho Shah capitulated. As the subedar was leaving I managed to grab his attention. I demanded that we political prisoners should be allowed some newspapers. He told me to shut up and sit quietly. I complied. Might is always right in prison.

It is two days to Eid-ul-Azha. Nobody has come to visit me. I ask Mashooq Ali whether I would be allowed to say my Eid prayers. He laughs away my request. I want to know when I will be removed from the Bund Ward. He tells me that they do not wish to spread the political virus. I am a threat to the general political health of the prison. I tell him that Gen. Zia's days are numbered. The entire country is up in arms. Mashooq corrects me. The movement is confined to Sindh, and that too, in only some areas. The movement has failed. Less then 600 MRD miscreants are in Sukkur Jail. Some of them are already signing mercy petitions. Sardar Noor Ahmed has done so and has been released. "We have seen many political leaders here. Hazar Khan Bijrani, Yusuf Jakhrani, Haleem Peerzada, Ali Ahmed Shah of Ranipur have all been here.

"What can they do to General Zia?" I feel quite depressed.

Holiday. A new prisoner was brought into our ward. He was in foot fetters. He was lodged with Rano Dharejo. I asked him where he was from. He said he had been transferred from Mianwali Jail. He was wanted in Jacobabad. He said that he was a well behaved prisoner and was given days off his sentence for good behaviour. He was confused as to why he had been sent here. We tried to give him solace. He told us that the MRD struggle was not as intense in Punjab as it was in Sindh.

It was the evening before Eid. I missed my family. I was very depressed. Javan comes in early. I ask him about Eid prayers. He says no. I lie back on my blanket and doze off. I am awakened by Javan's voice. He informs me that Eid prayers are about to commence. I go out and perform ablutions. Javan leads me to the Eidgah. When we get there prayers have already started. I join the others. I listen to the 'Khutba' with Javan's constant, heavy presence. Over a thousand persons have thronged here. I know nobody. I ask my neighbour about the movement. He tells me it has spread all over Sindh. 'Zia is finished'. We all pray. All the prisoners embrace each other. I stand alone. Suddenly a young man comes towards me and wishes me Eid Mubarak. Behind him are Rafiq Memon and Salim Ansari. I am introduced to the young man. This is Rafiq Safi Munshi. Javan hovers like an angel of death. Other prisoners converge on to me. We embrace. The congregation is dispersing. Javan tells me that I have to return to my ward.

I say goodbye to Salim Ansari, Memon and Rafiq Safi. They watch me go with sad eyes. They are helpless.

We are back at the ward. I feel like meeting and greeting my ward mates. Javan ignores my desire. Mohabbat Mani says from his cell, "Maulana Eid Mubarak". My eyes are suddenly misty. I lie down. Javan informs us that food is being served. I expected a feast. Great expectations. Instead of dal there was a meat dish which would do a miser proud. Two pieces of meat swimming in raw 'masalla'. I eat and lie down. No food from outside.

The next day we saw Javan approach with a 'tiffin carrier'. He walked into Shosho Shah's cell and handed over the food. We were all very excited. The tiffin carrier contained biryani and a meat dish. The biryani was wrapped in 'Ibrat', the newspaper.

Shosho Shah decided to spread his good fortune around. Javan was told to distribute the food. He did so with great chagrin. I got a small portion of biryani as my share. I ate, savouring the taste. The prize was however, the newspaper.

Fortunately it was a recent edition. Anwar Shah was first to read it. We found out that Dadu, Khairpur, Hala, Hyderabad etc. had staged rallies. The struggle had picked up momentum. We also learnt that an 'Al-Zulfiqar' member called Rehmatullah Anjum had died when a bomb went off in a bathroom in a Lahore cinema.

We were discussing the contents of the newspaper when Javan approached carrying two cooking utensils. We know that a feast was in the offing. The pots were put outside Ghani's cell. This was a tribute to Ghani from other inmates of the jail. Rice and a meat dish. This was also distributed amongst us. As soon as we finished our second meal, two more tiffin carriers from Karam Gadani's home arrived. This was indeed a great

treat. Two days later Mohabbat Mani received food. I waited for some visitor. No one came. One night after 'Isha' prayers, I heard slogans. These slogans continued for a long time and went on the next day. It was obvious that some political prisoners had arrived in the jail. I asked Javan. He was not forthcoming. I asked Mashooq Ali. He said that some prisoners were brought in from Hyderabad. "The superintendent should have never allowed them to be together. They should have been sent here. The IG jails has been informed. He will come and teach these miscreants a lesson".

I feel I had to do something to protest against our conditions. I spoke to the two 'Haris' of the need to go on a hunger strike. They are willing. They tell me that I should be aware that a hunger strike is a prelude to beatings. "We are 'haris', we can take it. Can you? Please don't insult us by breaking your resolution".

After Fajr prayers we climbed into our window and facing the B-class jail began to raise slogans. "Zia Murdabad' General, Colonel Murdabad, MRD Zindabad." Javan came over and warned us. The 'haris' yelled 'Zia tey laanat'. We decided to go on hunger strike that evening. We continued raising slogans when Subedar Ghulam Qadir and his men entered. 'Maulana' what is this nonsense. Climb down. We continued with our sloganeering. They watched us. They were able to guage our defiance. They left us. Javan asked us for our blankets. We declined to comply. He left muttering. I asked Shosho Shah and Anwar Shah to join us. Shosho agreed. Anwar hesitated. When breakfast was served, we refused to accept it. We were setting a dangerous precedent. No lunch. No dinner.

Our strike was now 24 hours old. We wanted it registered in Register No. 36. Anwar Shah joined us now. Another day. No food. We were in our third day now. We had stopped drinking water as well, because Javan had taken our 'ghara' away.

Our bodies felt weak and exhausted. We raised slogans in this state. Fourth day. Our bodies were now in a sorry state. Javan begged us for his sake to give up our demands and call off the strike. I tell him that our principles are more important than his.

I was elected the leader of our group. At ten that evening Superintendent Durrani, Deputy Bhugio, Aslam jailor, Shafiq jailor and a contingent of police came into our ward. "I have come to talk to you, Maulana". "What is there left to talk about?" "What is the problem Maulana?" "You have tortured us. We are half dead. I have been here for two months. You want to know what the problem is".

'Okay, Okay, what are your demands?'

"I will not discuss my demands with anyone except the Governor or the I.G. Jails."

"What about you?" he says to the two 'Haris'. Khaskheli says, "Talk to the Mulla". Anwar and Shosho say the same. We raise slogans again. "Release prisoners from the Bund Ward. Jail Authorities Murdabad, Bobby Sands Zindabad". Durrani is perplexed. He abuses us soundly, in filthy language and leaves.

It is night Our throats are parched. Special breakfast. Temptation. Chapattis doused in ghee. Special tea. I feel dizzy. I am semi-conscious. I feel flies on my lips. Ants invade my nostrils. I cannot move these insects. I am exhausted. Shosho Shah is almost unconscious. Anwar Shah's condition is relatively better.

That evening Aslam jailor and Subedar Qadir come to see us. Koora Wada is in a critical state.

"Maulana."

I cannot answer.

Koora Wada begs for some water. Mashooq says "Pour some water on your leader's lips first."

Koora Wada does as he is told. I swallow a few gulps of water. I regain consciousness. I strike at the glass. It falls on the floor and shatters. I shout at Kora Wada.

"Lie down."

He does.

It is now morning. I hear some voices in my semi conscious state. Javan is trying to pour water down my throat. I hit out. I abuse Javan. Subedar Qadir and Aslam join Javan. A police guard is with them. They try and take us out of the Bund Ward. I tell them that we will not move until our demands are met. We are forcibly removed. They drag us out. Anwar Shah lies on the floor. We are very weak. We cannot resist. We are informed that we are being taken out of the Bund Ward and that I am being shifted to the political ward. The others are going to the Chakar Ward.

We are taken to the Subedar's office. From there I am escorted to the political ward. I see Rafiq Safi Munshi. He is reading a newspaper. He jumps up when he sees me, and greets me with great affection. I am laid down in my cell Rafiq Memon, Saleem Ansari, Shahid Ali Rana are all there. I am told by the subedar to break my strike. I refuse.

Rafiq Safi intervenes. He asks me what my demands are. I tell him about the torture inflicted on me. "Five of us have been on hunger strike for five days. I refuse to break my strike without meeting either the I.G Jails or the Governor".

Rafiq Safi fetches the jail doctor. He pressurises the doctor to enter my case in Register No. 36.

The Subedar speaks to Rafiq Safi. He is trying to persuade him to convince me to break my strike. Rafiq says "Why don't you accept his demand to see the IG Jails?"

"We have rung him up in Hyderabad. He is aware of the situation. He should be here soon". They warn Rafiq Safi that if I did not break my strike, I would not be allowed to enjoy political prisoner status. Rafiq Safi is worried. The prisoners consult each other. I am not informed about their discussion.

At three O'clock, I am informed that my demand has been fulfilled. The IG Jails has arrived. I refuse to go to his office. I insist that he come to see me in my cell. Rafiq Safi tells me that I should not be so stubborn. "The man has come from Hyderabad. You should go and see him". I see reason. I am assisted by some policemen and am soon face to face with Noor Illahi Shaikh.

"What are your demands, Maulana?" Then he shouts, "Bring the Maulana some juice".

I can see through this obvious police ploy.

"I have been tortured along with my fellow cell mates for over two months". The IG abuses the superintendent. He asks me to drink the juice. I say I will.

"I want you to hold an enquiry about the treatment meted out to political prisoners in this jail. We demand the facilities that are stipulated in the jail manual".

"Bring me a jail manual" "Its in the B-class jail, Sir", "Take Maulana back to his cell".

This is an obvious drama being enacted to get me to break my fast. I am not moved.

Rafiq Safi and the rest were waiting for me anxiously. I tell them that the IG Jails has not acceded to my demands. Rafiq Safi is very practical. He tells me that because I am from Karachi and not from the interior of Sindh, I may not be able to mobilise sympathy here.

"You have been on strike for six days. If you should die, there is no guarantee that the other political prisoners will take up your struggle. You have been released from the Bund Ward, you have put your protest against the jail conditions and torture on record. This is sufficient. Break your fast now. We cannot afford to lose you".

I was quite upset with Rafiq Safi, initially. Later on I felt that his frankness was essential to break my stubborn resolve. His foresight was important to my myopic stance. I succumbed to his logic. I broke my fast with a glass of 'Naurus' and some biscuits.

Two hours later I was able to stand on my own. Rafiq Safi called for a compounder to give me injections to revive my strength.

I sleep. The next morning Rafiq Safi sends me some cream. I see him sitting on a chair behind a table. He does not look like a prisoner. He tells me that we are in a semi-bund ward. The doors to our ward are locked. We are not allowed to go out of our ward except when we get visitors.

I am feeling a bit better, thanks to the tea and biscuits, courtesy Rafiq Safi. He tells me about his case. "I was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by a special military court in Karachi. I was an engineer with the KESC. I was charged with selling information about Pakistan's Atomic Project to the USA. I was educated abroad in the USA and Thailand. I was an Assistant Professor at the Sindh University. I was a proficient debator and have won prizes all over Pakistan. The University of Sindh bestowed a gold medal to me as well. I am a founder member of the PPP and have been involved in active student politics. Your could call me a student leader of sorts. It is an irony that in a country which is ruled by US agents like Zia and the other generals, I have been accused of being an American spy. The fact is that I am being persecuted for my role in the agitation against the hanging of Mr. Bhutto. I helped distribute Bhutto Shaheed's book 'Rumours and Truth'."

Rafiq Safi is about 36 years old. He is of a medium height. Always clean shaven with a balding head. He has immaculate manners. He is from a very well to do family of Sukkur. His Urdu is extremely good.

One day Aslam jailor came into our ward. Rafiq Safi reprimanded him about his style. "Beware of the time when you will be our prisoner?" I was quite impressed by his strength of character and courage.

We were six inmates in the barracks. We exchanged notes on our respective experiences. The solitary fan revolved lethargically, overhead.

Rafiq Memon told us that he was shackled and fettered and moved from ward to ward. "My shins were badly bruised by the shackles. It was impossible to walk with the fetters. Whenever I stumbled and fell I was beaten by my guards with lathis. I was stripped and flogged 20 times. My spectacles were smashed during this ordeal. They sprayed spirit on my raw wounds. I could not sit. I had to lie on my stomach. Ants crawled over my body. Do you know that in ward No.1 more than 80 prisoners are held in limbo. They do not know if they will live or die. They are beaten every three days. I was there for 25 days. Suprintendent Durrani used to come looking specially for me. He would have me dragged out and tell the guards to beat me every day. If I stared at him he would get uneasy and order me to look down. I tried talking to him once. He ordered his guards to pull me out and beat me with lathies and shoes. He told me that I had no right to try and talk to

him. On one occasion a prisoner requested Durrani to have him shifted to the Chakar Ward. This poor man was sadistically beaten for opening his mouth. He nearly died. After 25 days my shackles were removed but I was kept in chains".

Saleem Ansari related his tale "I was put into rod fetters. The ward Alamdar told me to sweep the floors. This was not possible when you are shackled. Alamdar Hanif Shaikh was adamant. My refusal was viewed as an act of defiance. A Muqaddam called Yakub was summoned who began punching me in the stomach. I vomited blood. I fainted. They had to put me on a glucose drip. On the third day I was shifted to Sukkur Civil Hospital. The doctor on duty felt that I should be admitted. However, the jail authorities refused to accept his opinion. I was taken back to prison."

"There were 250 prisoners in ward No.3. All of them are beaten twice every week. Some prisoners have steel reins in their mouths. Luckily the night guard was a kind hearted soul. Rafiq Safi would send me some food through him. My fetters were removed after 20 days and I was simply chained".

Salim Ansari said that when he was in his ward he realised that the adjoining barracks housed many political prisoners. 'Aftab Shaban Mirani, Altaf Bhaiyo, Siddiq Kharal were amongst them. They had to wear prison uniforms which never seemed to fit. Altaf Bhaiyo was Sardar Haji Kurey Khan's son. The Haji was the Sardar of a tribe in Shikarpur and had always represented his city in the assemblies. Altaf Bhaiyo and Aftab Shaban were always handcuffed together. They were forced to fill buckets of water and carry them. They were also made to do 'laipa'. When Aftab Mirani's son came to visit he was told that his father had been transferred to Mach Jail.

Rafiq Memon had not been allowed any visitors since he arrived at the jail. Saleem Ansari narrated the tale of how his old parents were forced to stand outside in the sun for hours before they were allowed to see him. I was over-whelmed. I wept.

I met Rafiq Safi the next morning. He told me that because of his attitude and his fight for prisoner's rights, he had also been locked up in the ward. He had been warned against mixing with the prisoners. We were conversing when someone knocked.

Rafiq Safi went over and chatted with some one. He came back and told me that a prisoner, Billu Mal had died last night for lack of medical attention. The superintendent had put his body in ambulance and sent it to a hospital. All this after the man was dead. Rafiq Safi was furious. He said that he would take the matter up. "I have kept social and political workers informed about conditions in prison. My stay in Hyderabad, Sukkur and

Khairpur jails have been an eye opener. In fact I have written an article on the death of one prisnoer, Imam Ali Shah, in Khairpur Jail".

At ten that morning I was informed that I had a visitor. I went over to the jail office generally called 'Mari'. I could not see anyone. Ten minutes later my three younger brothers Rao Zaheer, Mohammad Ashraf and Rao Abdul Ghaffar were led in. Rao Zaheer said that he had come to Sukkur twice before for a visit but was not allowed to see me. He had waited for a whole day on both occasions. I was also told that my brother Abdul Qayoom had also been to Sukkur to see me before Eid- ul-Azha. He had pleaded with the jail authorities to allow in the fruit and sweets that he had brought, but to no avail.

There are other political prisoners in the meeting room. I see a familiar face. He is Ismail Memon, a student of Jamia Aloom-i-Islamia of New Town, Karachi. He tells me that he courted arrest in Sukkur and was lodged in 'Achha' chakar.

My brothers have brought a fair amount of fruit and other edibles. I thank them and bid them goodbye. I am led straight back to my ward.

I notice that Rafiq Safi's cell has been converted into a meeting area. Six other prisoners are sitting with him. I am introduced to them. They are political prisoners. This was the first time I meet Hazar Khan Bijarani, Aftab Shaban Mirani, Yusuf Jakhrani, Abdul Razzak Soomro, Hadi Bakhsh Mehr and Sadiq Kharal. Razak Soomro has huge mustaches which he strokes constantly. He obviously wants to make an impression on me. Rafiq Safi is in a plaintive mood. He tells them that during the course of his six year spell in prison, he has, through his efforts, forced many political prisoners from 'bund' wards. 'Now I am in a similar situation. What have you done for me?'

Hazar Khan turns to me. He tells me that this meeting had been arranged after a great deal of bargaining with the jail authorities. They are willing to accede to all our demands but refuse to help Rafiq Safi and the prisoners from Karachi.

These honourable prisoners now enter our barrack. Hazar Khan tells me that they were previously lodged here. 'We were 20 then. There was only one spastic fan here. We wanted more but they were not given to us. The main gate was kept locked at all times. We were not allowed food from home'.

Rafiq Safi says, "You are under detention. You can get food from home". We feed our guests biscuits and tea. The biscuits are courtesy my brothers. They leave.

Sikandar Khaskheli and I talk, cell to cell. He tells me that Anwar Shah is still in hospital but still in bar fetters. Shosho Shah has been shifted to B-class.

There is a special mess for political prisoners. The Pir of Ranipur, Bijarani, Aftab Mirani, Mumtaz Talpur, Baka Mohammad Jakhrani, Yusuf Jakhrani, Saifulah Qazi and Hadi are the persons who contribute to it's upkeep. We are served meat three days a week. The remaining four days a vegetarian menu is served. Ali Marfani, a political prisoner, served as mess secretary. He was under a cloud. It is said that he has embezzeled eight thousand rupees from the mess fund. One day he signed a letter of unconditional apology and secured his release. He was replaced by Pappu Bhutto and Abdul Qadir Bhutto.

I spend the night chatting with Haji Kumhar who has very kindly lent me his pillow. He is a retired army man. He tells me that he had gone home to Badin on leave, where he had murdered someone. He is serving a life sentence. He had already spent 12 years in prison. His family had abandoned him. He said that he works very hard and makes goods worth 400-500 ruppees every day for the jail authorities. He is a potter and his speciality are beautiful vases. His vases have been presented to dignitaries from abroad. No one can make vases like me in the whole of Pakistan. I work seven hours a day. My vases are in every jailors home. The IG Jail always picks one up on his rounds. I am never rewarded nor is my sentence reduced".

We received four parathas and two newspapers in the morning. These were sent to us by Sardar Musa Lashari. The messenger said that theSardar, Qari Sher Afzal, Fatehyab Ali Khan, Ali Mukhtar Naqvi and Rahim Baluch has sent their greetings. I enquired about their health.

I was told that they lived on the floor above the hospital. They were not allowed to come down. They were taken for walks under guard. I asked the man why these people were locked up, when other political prisoners enjoyed relative freedom. "They are there at their own request. They do not wish to mix with the rest. They were offered B-class but they prefered to stay where they are. They only meet 'senior' political prisoners". I sent my greetings and wondered if these greetings would be allowed in.

More newspapers. This time from Aftab Shaban. The newspapers are a few days old but are very welcome. Billu Mal's death has been reported. Rafiq Safi was thrilled to bits. He had obviously got through to the press.

The next day many prisoners carrying their belongings trooped into our ward. They had all courted arrest and were on transfer from Larkana. They were from the PPP, JUI and Awami Tehreek. The Awami Tehreek leader Hamzo Hari was a shrewd political animal. I was greatly impressed by his

class analysis of the struggle. My interest in the SAT (Sindhi Awami Tehrik) leader Rasul Baksh Palejo's strategy was stirred by this chance meetingwith one of his workers.

The ward boys were disturbed. They were having a tough time with the latrines which were always full. The new prisoners stuck together. After lunch we all raised slogans. The political ward resounded with our full throated cries. Other prisoners gathered. We hear slogans from outside our ward. The virus is spreading. Bars are clanked, locks rattled and the walls pushed by human battering rams. There is general pandemonium. The upshot is that our new arrivals are shifted post haste. They promise to have us released from this semi-bund ward.

The political ward in Sukkur has a fascinating history. It has been the home of many illustrous freedom fighters. Maulana Azaad, and Gandhi are two of its most famous inmates. Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Nawab Bugti spent many years here.

The next day Rafiq Safi has visitors. He meets them. On his way back he goes to see Qari Sher Afzal and Fatehyab and persuades them to shift to the political ward. He brings back some letters. One is for me. It is from my sister.

Rafiq Safi has a letter from Kot Lakhpat Jail. It is from Rasul Baksh Palejo. He reads it out to me. Palejo writes "If the rain clouds come from the Punjab we can be sure of a good harvest. However, I prefer wearing a three piece suit'. This is his way of applauding the three militant provinces of Pakistan and at the same time reprimanding Punjabi's recalcitrance.

The superintendent is on his rounds. Rafiq Safi, myself and Mujeeb Mehr (who is a graduate, and who has been sentenced by a special court to 25 years) stand outside our cells. The superintendent stops to chat. I tell him that I had asked for some supplies twice but to no avail. He shouts at his subordinate and orders him to do the needful. Durrani is a changed man. One face for the Bund ward. One face for the political ward. Today's prisoners. Tomorrow's masters, perhaps.

At 2.00 p.m. Siraj Siyal a worker of the SAT comes into our ward. He tells us that the superintendent had warned him not to meet Rafiq Safi. "Rafiq Safi is a traitor, he is anti state, anti-jail and anti Islam". Rafiq hands over Palejo's letter to Siraj and tells him to read and return it. I tell Siraj to try and get us out of here or at least have the gates opened. I also plead Anwar Shah's case with him.

Early next morning slogans are heard in the jail. 'Munjho Sathi, Junjho Sathi Jam Saqi, Jam Saqi', It seems as if Saqi has been brought here. We ask the prisoners. Jam Saqi was tried in a military court in a conspiracy case.

This case had received great publicity. Nobody knows why these slogans were being raised.

Sikandar Khaskheli comes to the gate and tells me that he has spoken to his Sardar Raees Qazi Hadi Baksh and he has promised to talk to the superintendent about our predicament. I tell him that we don't need the 'waderas'. 'You people are enough to push down this gate'. Rafiq Safi and Rafiq Memon burst out laughing at my simplicity. They are obviously better qualified to judge the 'waderas' indispensibility or otherwise, than I am.

It was Friday. Haji Kumhar had been entrusted with the keys to our ward. As soon as he opened the gate, Sikandar Khaskheli and some men barged in. They raised slogans. Haji Kumhar was worried. He begged us to tell our comrades to leave. I could see that if the pandemonium persisted the Haji would be in deep trouble. I told Sikandar to leave. They had made a point. Waderas were dispensable! They left.

Haji Kumhar went away to deposit the keys in the 'Mari'. Nobody came to our ward. No milk turned up nor did we get our food. It was 01.00 p.m. We were getting restive and hungry. In prison the stomach is a very precise watch. Hunger makes people unreasonable. I noticed that Rafiq Safi, Rafiq Memon and Saleem Ansari were giving me dirty looks as if to say that I was responsible for this collective punishment. We sent a prisoner to the kitchen. Our food was thrown over the wall, but the gate remained shut. We boiled a few eggs and ate in silence. That evening when the guards arrived they were noncommital about our punishment. Little did we know that it was the presence of Jam Saqi that had galvanised the prison staff against all the prisoners.

Jam sent us a message saying that he would visit us at 9.00 a.m., the following morning. We were quite excited. We made arrangements to receive him befittingly. He arrived with 20 old people including Saifullah Pathan and Yusuf Khakrani. He embraced Rafiq Safi and kissed him on his neck. He did the same to me. I had never seen him before. He was just over 40. He wore glasses and dragged his feet as he moved. (I asked Rafiq if he was paralysed on one side). He was in a sweater and a waistcoat and had an ajrak carelessly thrown over his shoulders. We offered them tea. Jam offered a sip of tea to all of us from his own cup. He squatted on the floor using his ajrak to support his back. He looked every inch a peasant and yet every inch a revolutionary. He said that he was pushed for time and had to meet a lot of people. 'I am here because of people's power. I did not bother to take permission from the jail authorities. I do not recognise their law. I will either have your gate opened or have you all transfered to where I am. That is my promise'. We were stirred. He left.

At about 12 noon, Hadi Bakhsh Mehr and a youth came over to meet Rafiq Safi. They chatted with him for a long while. Mehr took him aside and pleaded with him to show some patience. 'Give us a day or two your gate shall be opened. The superintendent and I have a common lady friend. She is going to see him tonight. Before her visit she will be coming over to see me. I am going to tell her that during the foreplay she must use her chanms to extract this concesion from Durrani'.

Rafiq Safi was horrified. He yelled at Mehr, 'Tell her not to bother. She can open her own 'gates'. We shall open ours'.

Interestingly a few days later an enquiry was ordered against Durrani for moral turpitude. It was alleged in the charge sheet that prostitutes were granted access to the prison after 7.00 p.m. Durani, Hadi Baksh Mehr and Abdur Razzaq Soomro spent their nights together in great revelry. They drank and made merry and fulfilled their carnal desires. The two prisoners had an alibi. They would tell their fellow inmates in B-class that they had visitors from home. It was the month of Moharram, passion had to be channelised.

On Ashura, a guard appeared. He told us that all the prisoners except Rafiq Safi could attend the Majlis. We sat down and discussed the issue. It was decided to go to the majlis sans Rafiq Safi. We made the guard feel very small when we kept saying that he was useless. We got to the Chakri Barracks. I was told that Fatehyab Ali Khan was waiting for me. I saw 50 - 60 people sitting on rugs. Fatehyab was amongst them. He was wearning spectacles and was smoking a cigar. He stood up and met me. There was a cool reserve about him that was quite disconcerting. Qari Sher Afzal, Rahim Baluch and Mukhtar Naqvi were with him. They were more warm in their greetings.

Rafiq Memon got straight to the point. 'There are over 400 prisoners languishing in the Bund Ward. Rafiq Safi is also confined, and has not been allowed out even on this holy day. You have to take some practical steps. This jail is one large torture cell'.

Fatehyab's answer was not convincing. "A jail is a jail. These sort of things happen here. We cannot afford to jeopordise the comfort of hundreds for a few marked men". He almost sounded like an official jail spokesman. Our tone became a little strident. We were visibly upset.

Qari Sher Afzal intervened, "We will not allow any political prisoner to undergo any form of torture". This was greeted by spontaneous applause. The JUI workers had organised a rally in the 'Kaley ward'. The rally was addressed by Qari Sher Afzal, Fatehyab and Qari Hayat of Ghotki. Lunch was arranged in the B-class prison.

Here we met Mumtaz Ali Talpur, Ali Naqvi Shah, Khan Bukhari, Aftab Shaban, Khadim Hussain Doryo, Yusuf Khakrani, Agha Saifuddin, Agha Saifullah Pathan, and the Qazi of Shikarpur. We got back that evening. Rafiq Safi told Fatehyab to come to the ward the following day and talk to him. In Sindh the wadera does not talk to the SP. directly. He negotiates with the subedar'.

The following day Qari Sher Afzal and Ali Mukhtar Naqvi arrive. They are greeted with great warmth. Fatehyab did not come because he is afraid of our wrath. Naqvi says that Fatehyab is very selfish. "If we receive a newspaper or magazine in the ward, Fatehyab immediately pounces on them and after reading them locks them in his briefcase. We are not given a chance to read these precious magazines and newspapers. He is very subdued in jail. He addresses the guards as 'Guard Sahib'. He did not come here today because he believes that the jail authorities may take notice. He warned us also about coming here he stays locked up in the room above the hospital like a hermit. He avoids people. He tells us not to meet too many people. He has this phobia about the intelligence agencies. He sees the C.I.D everywhere. He is petrified of being picked up and tortured".

Naqvi continues with this little piece of character assasination. "When we arrived here from Karachi our luggage was searched. Fatehyab and I were handcuffed together. We went into Durrani's office Fatehyab wanted to establish his credentials. He spoke in English and said that he was from the MKP and the secretary general of the MRD. Durrani told him to get out of his office in English. Since that day he is mortally afraid of Durrani".

We break our gossip session and have lunch. Qari Afghan picks up the thread.

"Fatehyab and I courted arrest together. After our arrest we were taken to a summary military court presided over by a colonel. I told the colonel that Islam has no provision for Martial Law. Zia has systematically dismantled the 1973 constitution. He has made fun of Islam. He has brought us to the brink of economic bankruptcy. The colonel asked me if this was my statement to the court. I said it was. He tells me that I can rethink and amend my statement. Fatehyab pipes up and says that he would like to consult with his counsel. I continued with my tirade against Zia. I tell the colonel that we will continue to preach against Zia from our pulpits. We will persuade people to take to the streets and bring down this oppressive regime. We will provoke agitation in educational institutions and continue our struggle for democracy. I did not need any lawyer to say all this. Fatehyab was amazed at my outspokeness. It was nearing 'Asr' and our visitors left us."

The following day some activists of the Sindh Peoples Student Federation paid us a visit. They included Sikandar Lakho, Rafiq Rind Yunus Khakrani, and Khosa. They have been trying to remove the restrictions on our movement. Lakho tells us that when he first came here in September 1983, all political prisoners had to sprinkle water in the yard, sweep the grounds and apply 'laipa'. He says that no visits were permitted. He was a frequent inmate of the jails. He had been arested many times and on two occasions was mercilessly flogged.

Niaz Bhatti tells his story. 'At 2.00 A.M. One night, 30 of us including Makhdoom Khaliquzzaman, Fazil Rahu, Pir Mazhar ul Haq, Masood Bhatti, Abdur Rehman Bhatti, Nazir Lashari, Siraj Mian, Nazakat Nazami, Hussain Shah Bukhari, and Amir Hussain Shah Jamote, were taken out of Hyderabad Central Jail and brought here. The reason for our sudden transfer was that we had managed to hoist a PPP flag over the jail office. Zia was touring Sindh. He was expected in Hyderabad. We decided to strike. We marched behind Pir Mazhar ul Haq of Dadu, holding the PPP tri-colour aloft and 1200 valiant prisoners marched behind our banner. There was a general state of panic. The jail sirens were sounded. We did not dither in our conviction. We broke down the gate and climbed up the roof of the office. The DMLA, Hyderabad, Hakim Arshad Qureshi and the IG Jails, Noor Ilahi Shaikh had arrived on the scene. They ordered us to get off the roof and remove the flutering flag of defiance. We told these stooges that we will bring down the flag at sunset with the same fevour and dignity that we have displayed while hoisting it. We held on to the flag and defended it all day long. It was the symbol of our resistance. Slogans rent the air. As dusk fell we brought down the flag with honour. We went back to our respective barracks with the flag, in the shape of a highly volatile procession".

"That night a heavy armed guard came into our barracks and began to implement our transfer orders. Some of us were sent to Khairpur and some to Sukkur. Pir Mazhar, Fazil Rahu and Ghulam Mujtaba Jatoi are in Mach".

Niaz Bhatti told us that when they arrived in Sukkur, they were ordered to crouch in pairs. The prisoners refused. They were taken to various barracks. As soon as the prisoners were deposited in their cells they raised slogans of 'Jiye Bhutto'. The old prisoners were frightened. "They did not respond to our slogans nor did they greet us. The degree of intimidation was obviously very high at that point in time. All our belongings had been confiscated upon arrival we had nothing to spread on the cell floor. We were so tired that we fell asleep. We did not hear the whistle. We were roused from our slumber by kicks and shoves. We were told to squat. We

refused. We decided to fight against the injustices in the jail. As political activists this is the only way. I started to sing a revolutionary song in Sindhi. My comrades joined me in a chorus. The words were insprational. 'Lift the banner aloft; raise your voices, move onwards, fight to the last, kill or be killed, the time has come to avenge.' Silence greeted our song. The superintendent and his armed dogs came into our ward. They told us to come forth one by one. We refused to allow our unity to he broken. The superintendent ordered the guards to beat us. We are baton charged. Blows rain on us. We continue to raise slogans. We are being watched by the other political prisoners who appear paralysed with fear. Gradually their fear evaporate. They find their voices. Slogans are raised. The virus spread. Slogans sprouted from all over the jail. A politicaly charged environment had been created by our act of defiance. Some prisoners leapt over the confining walls and surged towards us. Seeing the barricades coming down, the superintendent and his lackeys took to their heels. Nazir Lashari was unconcious. A young man brought us some water from the tap. We gave it to Lashari. His head was bleeding profusely. Someone tied a bandage around his wound. The slogans continue unabated".

More than 250 prisoners gathered in our ward. We refuse our afternoon meal. The political prisoners who number 800 go on hunger strike. That night we refuse to be locked in our cells. The hunger strike continues the following day as well. We formulate our demands. We tell the jail authorities that no negotiations are possible till all the political prisoners can confer together. They succumb to our demand. All political prisoners come together in a grand meeting. We decide to press for the following demands:

1. Prisoners must be allowed visitors.
2. No political prisoner should be confined in a cell or ward.
3. All facilities to political prisoners that are provided for in the jail mannal must be restored.
4. Proper medical facilities.

On the 3rd of November 1983 the activists of SPBF visited us and informed that they were about to start an agitation. They numbered 250, and felt that they could force the jail authorities to open the gates of our ward and have the bar fetters removed from political prisoners like Anwar Shah. At five that evening, Rafiq Safi was summoned to the superintendent's office. He went. On his return he was accompained by Dr. Ismail Odejo and Halim Peerzada. He told us of the meeting.

"When I got to the 'Mari', I saw Jam Saqi, Haleem Peerzada, Dr. Ismail Odejo, Hazar Khan Bijarani, Aftab Shaban, Qari Hayat, Siraj Sujal, Abdur Rehman Bhatti, Mumtaz Talpur and Abdur Razzak Soomro sitting there.

The superintendent swore on the Quran that on Sunday he would see to it that we would be shifted to the ward that houses all other political prisoners. He also swore to remove the bar fetters from Anwar Shah. He appealed to us to go to the other prisoners and ask them to stop their agitation".

Rafiq Safi, Saleem Ansari and Rafiq Memon are brought out of the political ward. They are given a rousing reception by hundreds of political prisoners who have gathered outside the gate. The prisoners raise full throated slogans. Rafiq Safi is lifted upon the shoulders of some 'Hari' prisoners. A procession is formed. It moves around the prison. It is a marvellous sight. Activists from the JUI, PPP and Awami Tehrik rub shoulders and march towards the unifying goal of democracy.

Some youngters led by Siraj Sayal, Rafiq Rind and Yunus Kharkhani have discovered the commanding heights. They invite their heroes to come up. An impromptu political meeting is taking shape. Siraj Sayal promptly takes over as the stage secretary. Rafiq Safi makes a fiery and emotional speech, punctuated with slogans from the crowd. I am asked to speak. I do so for half an hour or so. My speech is lifted by wave after wave of slogans. I can see the jail administration. I know they can bear me. I tell the crowd of torture and the borrors that we have experienced in the Bund ward. I offer a prayer of thanks at the resolution of our ordeal. The meeting disperses. Rafiq Safi turns to Haleem Peerzada, "I don't care if they lock me up again. I have had an experience that can sustain me for months."

We all eat together. Some of the jail staff joins us. Rafiq Safi tells us that the events of that evening have no precedent in the 45 years old history of this jail.

I wake early in the morning and say my prayers I wait for the gates to open. The gates stare us in our faces. Locked in again. Slogans are heard. They are hostile slogans embellished with a threatening tone. At 10.30 the gates are opened. We enquire as to why 'Total' counting has not been observed. He cannot satisfy us.

The 'bhangi'has not come to clean the 'toilet'. A foulstench spreads. We protest. The sepoy does not pay us any heed. We are also running out of water in the earthern pots. We are obviously being punished.

At.2.30 p.m. food is brought to us. Rafiq Safi is told by a jailor that he is being transfered to Dera Ismail Khan. Rafiq Safi collects his belongings. I am also warned that my transfer orders might have been issued. I also pack some of my books in a makeshift bag made from date palm leaves. A pot of water is left outside our room. The stench is now unbearable. I feel drained and sleep.

At 2.00 in the morning I am awakened by Rafiq Memon who tells me that I am being transfered. I wake up with a start. I see 15 - 20 policemen standing

outside my cell. I emerge. I want to go to the toilet. My guards refuse my request. I notice that Rafiq Safi is also standing by. I am escorted to the 'Mari'. My guards are Hanif Shaikh, Mehrab Chandio, Mustafa Chandio, and Peerzada. My body is wracked with pain. I want to sit down but I am reprimanded by a guard. I stand. Rafiq Safi is also brought here. We wait. We are joined by our comrades, Anwar Shah, Abdul Qadir Khokar. Some of them are in bar fetters. I am handcuffed to Rafiq Safi.

I whisper to Rafiq that we should not be apprehensive of going to D.I Khan. "Maulana Fazlur Rehman is there. We will have great chats with him". We are loaded into a van. It appears to be heading for Hyderabad. It stops at Khairpur. A guard removes the handcuffs form Rafiq Safi's wrists and now I am properly cuffed. It is very cold. We are all freezing. Anwar Shah tells us that he was given a tearful farewell by the inmates who were weeping inconsolably. He showed us the bruises on his shoulder. The others tell us that they have been on hunger strike. All other prisoners in their ward were also on hunger strike. They were beaten till they accepted some food.

I want to go to the toilet desperately. My head is spinning. I vomit. The floor of the van is covered with my spew. Rafiq Safi and Anwar Shah beat the van with thier fists to get some attention but to no avail. It is nearing daybreak.

The van stopped. The officers and sentries are having some tea. I plead with them: "I have not been to the toilet for over 20 hours. I have cramps in my stomach and have been vomiting. Please let me go". They relent.

Rafiq Safi says he wants some tea. He offers to buy breakfast for everyone. We are allowed to come out of the van. I go into the fields and crouch. The guards are standing within yards of me and encroaching on my privacy.

We sit at the hotel and have tea. We borrow some papers and a pen from the hotel owner and write letters home. He promises to post the letters. A Sindhi guard asks Rafiq Safi where he lives in Sukkur. Rafiq tells him and requests him to inform his sister of his transfer. The guard is sympathetic.

The bill comes to Rs.60 Rafiq Safi searches between the leaves of his book for money. He can't find it. I have hidden Rs.200 in the space of the shalwar's belt. I give the bearer Rs.100. We pay for our guards as well. We mount the van. We are at Hala. A city known for its religious and political fervour.

Hyderabad Central Jail

The van arrives at Hyderabad Central Jail at about 9.00 a.m. We are dismounted from the van. I am the first to enter the jail premises. I am taken to the 'Mari' where I am thoroughly searched. The sepoy asks me to take off my shalwar. He knows where I hide my money. All my belongings are confiscated. I am led to my cell. I want to go to the political prisoner's ward. I am told that my destination is not my concern.

We walk into the bund ward. The hawaldar tells the blacksmith to fashion bar fetters for me. I protest. I tell the 'hawaldar' that I am a political prisoner and such treatment cannot be meted out to me. Just then a guard rushes in. He tells the hawaldar not to chain my legs. I am searched again and locked up in a cell. Welcome to Hyderabad.

The cells are full of prisoners. A prisoner wishes me. I acknowledge his greetings. He tells me his name is Hamid Khaskheli. Just then I notice that Rafiq Safi is being sent into our ward. I try and get his attention but the guard warns me of dire consequences if I tried to communicate with any other prisoner. Rafiq Safi is encumbered with bar fetters. So is Anwar Shah.

Behind our ward are some barracks known as 'Quarantine'. The prisoners from these barracks peer at us and tell us in sign lauguage to remain steadfast in our commitment to democracy.

Suddenly a cry of 'Ya Ali Madad' goes up. I ask the prisoner his name. He tells me that he is called Qalandar Baksh Khosa. A whistle is heard and the prisoners assemble in pairs. The Deputy is on his rounds. He is called Rahim. He stands outside Rafiq Safi's cell and converses with him for 10 - 15 minutes. Later I ask Safi what transpired between them. He says "IG Jails was expected. He will decide about you. Deputy Rahim is a friend of mine. When I was undergoing rigorous imprisonment in Sukkur he was posted there. Initially we were at daggers drawn. Rahim was a brute. He tortured us and even stabbed a prisoner. We launched an agitation against his brutality. Rasul Baksh Palejo, the leader of the SAT and a leading intellectual of Sukkur was also in Sukkur Jail at that time. Both of us appealed to

the High Court about this heinous act. This was in 1981. Qamaruddin Abbasi was the superintendent of the jail. He came to us, to try and persuade us to call off the agitation and revoke our appeal. Palejo told the superintendent that we sindhis were very courageous people. We have honour. We forgive the enemy who visits our home. Deputy Rahim is a Mohajir brother. He comes from a good family. Rasul Baksh said that Rahim had shoved a stick up the anus of a prisoner. This was unforgiveable. All that was needed to be done now as punishment was to shove the stick up his buttocks, if not three then at least half an inch. The superintendent was red. They left us in a huff".

Two prisoners from 'Quarantine' climb a tree and become our communications system. They listen to our tales and relay it to the other wards. Soon the jail knows about the new political prisoners who are being kept in the bund ward. At 5.00 p.m. the blacksmith comes in and removes the fetters from Rafiq Safi and Anwar Shah. Rafiq Safi asks the guards to shift him closer to my cell. The guards attitude has suddenly undergone a sea of change. Their behaviour is now soft. We realise that the political prisoners in the jail must have put pressure on the administration. Our belongings were returned to us. The utility of pressure tactics is brought home to us. The next morning we have breakfast which comprises of tea and dry bread. We are told that our other comrades from Sukkur are still on hunger strike. The guards ask us to intervene.

Rafiq Safi agrees to play the role of mediator. The prisoners are adament that their demands have to be met first. They want thier foot fetters to be removed. Their feet are badly bruised and are covered with blood clots. The jail administrations relents. The hunger strike is called off.

It is 6th November 1983. Winter has made a brief appearance. The nights are getting cold. Some guards come over to our cell and tell us that we may be shifted out of the Bund ward very soon. Superintendent Nawaz does not allow prinsoners to stay locked up for long.

We discuss the possibility of being shifted. It happens after Maghrib. We are asked to come out of our cells. We are met by Superintendent Nawaz at the main gate. He informs us that Anwar Shah is not considered a political prisoner because be has been convicted for murder and armed robbery. Rafiq Safi says, 'According to you Mr. Bhutto was also a murderer. But he was a political prisoner". We are told to follow him. After a few hundred yards we are greeted by some notables. We all go into the 'Mari'. Nawaz presides over this group. He tells them that he has removed us from the bund ward because we are political prisoners. We meet our comrades. Rafiq Safi knows two of them. The group comprises of SBPF's Nawab Yusuf Talpur, ex-MPA Raees Ashiq Hussain Jatoi, Alam Shah Bukhari of

the Peoples Cultural Youth Organisation, SAT's Abdullah Mullah, Mr. Bhutto's principle secretary Ataur Rehman Memon, PNP's Abu Bakr Zardari, PPP's Maula Baksh Chandio and Comrade Mir Mohammad.

We are led to the court ward by Jatoi and Yusuf Talpur. We are served special dinner. We sit in Rana Javed's cell while our cell is being cleaned. Our hosts beg leave and go away.

The next morning Jatoi and Talpur visit us with news. The BBC has reported that the inmates of Sukkur Jail have organised a complete hartal. There are reports of gun shots being heard from inside the jail. The prisoners have held a jailer and a guard as hostages. They are demanding that three political prisoners who have been shifted to Hyderabad should be brought back. We are quite perturbed by this news.

We visit Daud Machi, a fellow prisoner. He has been sentenced to 60 years in prison. He has spent 35 of these already behind bars. He has enormous whiskers. He has served sentence in all the large jails of Pakistan. He was behind the jail disturbances in Sukkur in 1973, in which countless prisoners were killed.

He entertains us to tea. He tells us that all this is from God. Raja Javed joins us. He tells Rafiq that he needs his help. Rafiq goes out. Javed warns him not to say anything in front of Machi 'He is an informer'. We leave after having tea. Raja Javed shares his cell with Karachi's infamous 'history sheeter' Yusuf Pawwa. Yusuf tells us that his is the cell where Wali Khan and his comrades were lodged. He tells us that the Lawari Sharif case will also be tried here.

There are no fans. The mosquitoes wing around with total fearlessness. We desperately need a wire mesh to cover the bars. Pawwa finds a screen in one of the empty cells and tries to break it loose. A Pathan hawaldar, Zarab Gul enters. "Damn you Pawwa, why are you after this screen?" Yusuf ignores him. "I'll go and get a ladder, you do it youself". He does. Zarab Gul watches. Be careful. Don't do youself any damage". Pawwa replies, "Damage, what greater damage can there be. We are prisoners and you are our guard".

We have lunch with Raja Javed. He tells us about his case. "I am not afraid of being hanged. I have only one regret. I was unable to father a son. If I am taken away to the gallows please take all my belongings with you, Rafiq Sahib".

We console him..

Raja Javed is an institution. He has always served his sentences with courage and bravado. He was a rebel and was often in the fray against the jail authorities. We had heard about his exploits in Karachi Jail as well. All the prisoners tried to ingratiate themselves with him. Raja Javed was a

criminal from Karachi. He strutted around prison with a transistor radio slung across his shoulders. He was still in the business of supplying hashish and heroin to the prisoners. Somehow he was always helpful to political prisoners.

"During the MRD struggle, Aftab Shah Gillani and others were brought here. They were not allowed any visitors. They were confined to their wards. I was the only one who could roam around free. I got them a radio and made sure that they get a regular supply of newspapers. When Mohsin Raza came here in February 1983, he was kept in 'Quarantine'. I went to see the Superintendent and told him to transfer him to a ward where other prisoners like Ghaus Ali Shah were lodged. When he refused to comply with my request, I told him point blank that I would not be locked up that night. You know what I did ? I climbed a tree and refused to come down till the superintendent accepted my demand".

He told us that he spent most of his day with Daud Pathan. Yusuf Pawwa whispers that Raja has become a confirmed heroin addict.

After Zuhr prayers two young men come to see us. They are Pir Moazzam ul Haq and Mustafa Korai. The Pir is the brother of Pir Mazhar who in Mach and was the last of the MRD leaders to be released. Korai is with the SPBF and is a veteren of jails. He tells us that as soon as they. heard of our predicament, they orgnaised a political rally. Speeches were made about our conditions and against torture. "We issued an ultimatum that unless the three political prisoners are removed from the Bund ward, we will refuse to be confined to our cells, and would go on a hunger strike. Their ulitmatum had obviously worked.

Rafiq Safi tells them that he will draft a resolution which should be smuggled out to the press. Our visitors nod and then leave. A little later Raja Javed comes in with an oldish looking man. He is clad in a khaddar shalwar kameez and has salt and pepper hair. He wears glasses. I know the face. I have seen it peer out of newspapers. I finally place him.

It is Abid Zubairi, the Information Secretary of the NDP. He tells us of his role in effecting our transfer from the Bund Ward. We thank him. In 1970, Abid Zubairi was the leader of the Awami League in West Pakistan. He has a fairly large constituency amongst the Mohajir community. He is the author of several books. Whenever he takes part in student elections he drives around in a jeep with gunmen. He wraps his guns in cloth and only displays them at rallies. He has a dramatic nature. When he sits with students he lectures them on the methodology of subversion. He is a terror theoretician. He tells them how to make petrol bombs, how to cause confusion at rallies etc.

He presents his thesis on the current political crisis. "The MRD struggle is confined to Sindh".

We interrupt and point out that the response of Karachi has been lukewarm. He rises to the city's defence.

"Russia will never vacate Afghanistan. In fact it will probe further till it gets to the Arabian Sea. The Iran-Iraq war will continue till the US wants it to".

He then gets up and promises to send us a meal. We peep through some holes in our main gate and see a strange sight. Political prisoners playing Kabaddi. The ground is full of prisoners who wildly cheer their party members as they grapple or get away.

We go back to our rooms and find that Abid Zubairi has sent us the promised meal. We eat Raja Javed tells us that he has BBC on his radio. We listen avidly.

Once again the news of the ferment in Sukkur jail is broadcast. Once again shots were fired within the prison yard. Women prisoners have also joined the agitation. They have broken down their gate and come out into the general prison yard. It is late. We fall as asleep.

Talpur and Jatoi come to see us in the morning they tell us that because of the agitation we have been spared several months in the Bund Ward.

A young man comes to see us. He has two sons. One is called Raja Dahir and the other Brezhnev. He is Akbar Zardari. He has one thumb missing. He tells us that he is the son of a poor peasant. His father had put him through school after great sacrifices. 'During my vacations I used to help out on the lands. My thumb got caught in a threshing machine. I was with G.M. Syed but later went over to Shah Mohammad Shah. I was flogged in 1981. Shah Mohammad Shah was one of the prisoners who was flown to Damascus upon the demand of the PIA hijackers. He came back to Pakistan after a few months, and gave himself up before the Home Secretary. It is generally believed that S.M. Shah had sold information to the Army Intelligence about Al-Zulfiqar. Zardari tells us that the Sindhis are being victrmised. The Punjabis are hand in glove with the army junta. They have betrayed the MRD.

Comrade Mir Mohammad of the PPP comes to see us. He is from Mirpurkhas. He is incharge of the political prisoners mess. His name is associated with a scandal. It is generally believed that he has embezzelled Rs.30,000 from the Mess Fund. He had himself transfered to Mirpurkhas Central Jail where he wrote out an apology to the jail authorities and secured his release. Today he is accompanied by Alam Shah Bokhari, who boasts of his acquaintance with Ms Bhutto. He promises to let Ms Bhutto know about our conditions.

One the 11th November after the 'Total' a siren was sounded. The siren blared for over ten minutes. We were frightened by this unusual occurrence. Slogans are raised all night. Whistles are heard intermittently. The following morning the 'Total' is not opened.

We are in great distress. There are no toilets available. Finally we use a tin to perform our constitutionals. The entire cell stinks. We wait till 10.00 a.m. No breakfast No lunch. At about 1 p.m. armed guards appear in front of our cell. The subedar opens our cell doors. We are told to pick up our belongings. We are taken back to the Bund Ward. We are placed in bar fetters. A sepoy enters with heavier chains and insists that these be placed on our feet. We are then shoved into separate cells.

My cell is furnished with a tin filled with excreta and urine. The stench is horrifying. I demand that this be removed. The guard says that he is not a 'bhangi'. There is no provision for any toilet in the cell. I appeal to the guard. "I'll do it myself please let me out.".

It takes me over ten minutes to walk to the gate. The bar fetters are painful to an extreme. Rafiq Safi has a similar problem. He does the same. I see him stumbling with the tin full of shit in his hand. Humiliation is the most painful punishment for the sensitive. He stumbles over the bars and the excreta spills over his person. A guard helps him up. He is brought back and locked up. I can still see the pain on his face as he washes the shit from his clothes. His shins are as bloody as his eyes.

The slogans continue. We hear tear gas shells being fired. I ask the night duty guard, a man called Nawaz from Khushab, what the disturbance is all about. He abuses the PPP and MRD. He says that almost all the political prisoners are illiterates. One prisoner fell ill and the others broke out of their barracks. I have been on duty with these prisoners for over two months. Once I saw a line with clothes hanging on it. I told the prisoners to remove the clothes and the rope. They abused me roundly".

I realised the strength of numbers. If we were only a handful of political prisoners we would be crushed and beaten.

I ask Rafiq Safi how he is feeling. He has temperature. 'Ya Ali Madad' The slogans recurs. I responsd with 'Pir Ali Moula Madad' I ask this prisoner his name. He is Bahadur Ansari. He consoles me. He tells me that he and his comrades put a 'police chowki' to flames in Khairpur. Seven policemen had died in the blaze. He was transfered from Khairpur Jail.

I turn to the other inmates. They introduce themselves. Makoro Panwar, Hamid Khaskheli, Rano Dharejo, Abdul Qardir Khakar, Qalandar Baksh Khosa, Nasrullah Chandio, Piral Khan Dasti, Gul Mohammad Khosa, Ghulam Qadir Mehr, Amir Baksh Lotar, Mehmood Kaimkhani, make up our ward mates.

Early the next morning, whistles are heard. I wake up. I am told to sit and my blanket is taken away by the Alamdar. It is November and Hyderabad can get very chilly. An icy wind is blowing through our ward mocking our state. My feet feel numb. The cell floor is extremely cold. Suddenly to raise our spirits breakfast is served. Rafiq Safi says, sarcastically, "What a fabulous spread". Prison humour at its ironic best.

After breakfast Muqaddam Ghulam Allah Chandio deliberately places our earthern pots at a distance from us. I am told by Alamdar Sher Mohammad to clean my cell. I refuse. He abuses me and goes to Rafiq Safi. The cell is in a mess. Rafiq Safi realises this and persuades me to clean the place up. The other prisoners, Hamid Khaskheli and Mehmood Kaimkhani can be seen with broom and water in hand, cleaning their cells. They can barely walk because of their chains but they make the best of their restricted movements. They are asked to wash the verandah. They refuse. Sher Mohammad leaves them. There is a threatening streak in his gait. He returns shortly with guards carying batons. These guards mercilessly beat the prisoners. Both of them fall down unconcious. They are flung into their cells. An ominous silence reigns.

Sher Mohammad pulls out Piral Khan Dasti and Amir Baksh Lotar from their cells. They are ordered to wash the verandah. They are in bar fetters. They comply with the threat. They wash the floors, dust the doors and clean the bars.

Rafiq Safi asks for his copy of the Quran. Sher Mohammad brings it to him. He tells me that he bought his copy in the States some ten years ago, and never had a chance to study it carefully. He asks Sher Mohammad to allow him to consult me about some passages in the Quran. Sher Mohammad accedes to this request. We are now in adjacent cells. We now have two facilities in this ward. Our cummerband (shalwar belts) have not been confiscated. We have proximity. Rafiq Safi prognosticates that we will be released only after he completes the Quran. He reads the Quran till 2.00 p.m. like a man possessed.

I am feeling feverish. The cold has affected me. I tell the Alamdar. He fetches some tablets. I take them. Visits have been suspended for a couple of months.

Makaro Panhwar speaks to me in pidgin urdu. "Maulana you are an honourable man but I was displeased to see you pick up the excreta. This does not befit your status?" I smile. I tell him that the 'bhangi' is also a human being. He performs an essential function. He is not impressed. "The Bhangi is a Hindu. We are Muslims". I tell him that after all we wash our own excreta with our hands. He says, "yes but we never lick our spit after spitting it out. If you set a precedent, the guards will force all of us to do the same". My

fever has eased somewhat I fall asleep I am awakened by a shrill whistle. I sit up with a start. The Alamdar is standing over me. He wants my blanket. I protest. He snatches it and leaves. A 'Bhangi' comes in and empties our filth into a plastic bucket. The stench of stirred muck, and urine and excreta fills the cell for hours. I feel nausea.

A new sepoy comes to us. He is Alamdar Shamsheer. He has just returned from Sukkur Jail where he had gone with the IG. Rafiq Safi asks him about conditions in Sukkur Jail. He says that we are responsible for the disturbances there. "The whole place was in ferment. Two Maulanas were also injured". Rafiq Safi wanted to know how the B-class inmates had behaved. "They are honourable people. They stayed away from the fanatics".

I ask him about the inmates who live above the hospital. "Fatehyab Ali Khan is from a very good family. He told the IG that he had no truck with the mindless riff raff and subversivs. He was of the opinion that the mad Sindhis would ruin the dermocratic process. There was a short, fat maulvi there as well who was very volatile. He was jumping about. The I.G tried to pacify him but he kept his hunger strike going". This was obviously a reference to Qari Sher Afzal. Our interesting conversation was cut into by a sharp whistle.

All the prisoners sat down in pairs. Superintendent Nawaz was on his rounds. He was accompanied by his guards and Deputy Rahim. He was dressed in civies. He came close to our cells. He stopped to chat with Rafiq Safi. He then came over to my cell. I told him that I was unwell and wanted to see a doctor. I also wanted to know why I was being kept in the Bund Ward. I told him that I had been tortured in Sukkur Jail. The Superintendent listened patiently and told me to repeat my grievances to the IG who would be making his rounds the following day. He made a few noises about general cleanliness and left. Five prisoners were pulled out of their cells and made to wash the verandah. So much for the superintendents reprimand to the guards.

I am feeling better today. Rafiq Safi is reading from the Quran. I tease him. "Read faster, so that we can get out of here". He smiles. That night I talk to Makoro Panhwar about his case. He laughs and says I lived in a village near Nawabshah. A girl lived near my village I used to visit her every night. One night I entered her room and sat on her charpoy. She woke up with a start and asked me who I was. I was taken aback. She began to scream. It was someone else. The girl's sister. I ran. I had told the wrong girl my name. A case of theft was registered against me. I was arrested and sentenced to three years. I was lodged in Nawabshah Jail. I was transfered here along with 40 other prisoners. The rest have been released from the

Bund Ward. We were subjected to great brutality. I have been here for over four months. I have been in bar fetters and have been beaten with lathis and shoes. There was one month when I was beaten every day. The place was like hell. All you heard here were horrific screams. Superintendent Nawaz presided over our pain".

In the cell next to Makoro, sits Gul Mohammed Khoro. Makoro tells me that Gul has gone mad. He was transferred to Khairpur after the disturbances of 1983.

Bahadur Ansari complains of blood in his stool. He thinks that this ailment has been caused by merciless beatings. Ghulam Qadir Mehr is singing a Sindhi national song. It is a song about the travails of jails life. It is a catalogue of woe. It ends on a note of hope and a prophecy that all jails will one day be destroyed, the oppressors will be eliminated and in the apocalyptic aftermath there will be peace on earth. I feel quite inspired by the song and feel my ebbing endurance flow once again.

The stench is overpowering. I take refuge in dreams. The IG is on his rounds. There is fear in the air. The, whole evening has been spent cleaning the place. A whistle is heard. The harbinger of ill tidings. We hear IG Noor Illahi Shaikh's voice 'Where is Maulana Nomani? Where is Rafiq Safi?'

He comes to our cell. The superintendent points me out to the IG. He examines the history ticket which he has been put out for the inspection. My sheet has details of the speech I had made in Sukkur. I am accused of inciting a riot in the jail.

'Stand up Maulana!' I do. 'Do you know about Section 120 B? This is for agitators and traitors. You are the enemy of Pakistan! You are an enemy of Islam!'

'This is an old tactic. The opposition is always branded as traitors by the government in power.'

'I don't have the patience to listen to your political garbage. Do you realise what you have done? You have caused a jail break in Sukkar because of your seditious tongue!'

'We had warned you about the terror perpetuated by Superintendent Durrani. I merely catalogued this for our fellow inmates. We are being treated very harshly. It is up to you to improve our conditions. If you do not we will be forced to take matters into our own hands.'

He admonishes me and walks off to Rafiq Safi's cell. He asked him in English 'Are Peero Chandio and Peero Mani one and the same person?'

I cannot hear the reply. Rafiq Safi is telling him that time is a great leveller. The fate will one day reverse roles.

The IG tells him to steer clear of jail politics 'Shape up or we'll ship your body out of here.'

He proceeds to Anwar Shah's cell and speaks to him in Sindhi. He accuses Shah Sahib of postering disturbances in Sukker & Khairpur jails. 'Better correct your stance or we'll bury you here.'

He leaves us with these dire warnings. A discussion ensues about the visit. 'It appears as if we will have to undergo three months imprisonment' says Rafiq Safi.

I ask him what was the query about Peero Chandio all about.

'When I was the Munshi of Superintendent Abbasi, there was a prisoner called Peero Mani in the Sukker Jail. He was sentenced to 35 years imprisonment. He was accused of sodomy with a Syed youth in the jail. The other inmates were outraged. They said that this act carried a death penalty. Abbasi wanted Peero Mani transferred. The boy was sent to Landhi Borstal Jail and Peero to Hyderabad. Noor Illahi was the Superintendent at Hyderabad. He put fetters on Peero & beat him. This was a gross violation of rules. Peero went on a hunger strike. This strike lasted for 3 months which was a record. Noor Illahi registered a case of attempted suicide against the man. He sent a telex to Sukker asking for confirmation about Peero's sentence. I checked the records. There was nothing on file. He had not been sentenced. We drafted a reply saying that Peero Chandio a convict who was wanted by the police would be sent to Hyderabad as soon as he was apprehended. By doing so we got Noor Illahi into hot soup. He has obviously not forgotten." He made inquiries and found out that it was me who had drafted that telex. He has been my enemy ever since.'

After Zuhr prayers the jails was filled by screams of a prisoner who was being trashed. Ghulam Qadir Mehr told us that it was a new prisoner who was being given the treatment. Soon the screams died away. The prisoner was unconscious. The guard who takes over that evening is new. His name is Waheed. I ask Mehr about the new prisoner. He says that he has regained consciousness but is frightened out of his wits. I ask him his name. He answers with fear, 'My name is Akbar. I am known as Pawa. I had exchanged some harsh words with the subedar. He became incensed and had ordered me here.' He is in great pain. He moans loudly. I hope my words can salve his wounds. That's all we have here.

That evening I had a chat with Sindh's notorious dacoit Bakht Khawar. When he was arrested the IG Sindh had held a press conference & had given several police officers rewards for the arrest.

He tells me that he belongs to a village near Larkana. He was associated with the Jiye Sindh Students Federation. He was given refuge by the

students in their hostel rooms after each dacoity. 'I have escaped from the law several times. This time I feel victim to an informer's trap.'

I noticed that the Alamdar was a bit wary of Bakht. I asked him the reason. Bakht smiled, 'I was in Hyderabad Central Jail two years ago. I was in the Bund Ward. Jailor Qureishi was incharge of our barracks. He put me through a great deal of torture. He stripped me naked and made me walk around the chakar. He shaved my head and eyebrows. I went on hunger strike and after a week I was released from the Bund Ward. Upon release on bail from Jail, I went straight to Qureishi's house and opened fire. Qureishi was injured. Noor Illahi Shaikh escaped my wrath.

I would have killed him. The two of them were so scared that they called at my home with some notables of the area to arrange a ceasefire.

They are all scared of me. When I was in the District Jail I could see visitors even after the total was enforced. The superintendent Hal Soomro had made me swear on the Quran that I would not break jail. That is the only reason I served my sentence. It was too easy to escape. My friends who came to see me were armed with sten guns. I was transferred here all of a sudden. The IG drove me here himself, in his own car.'

Bakht Khawar was also accused of having homosexual relations with a boy in Sukker District Jail. I asked him about this. He was quite amazed.

'I was under the impression that I was brought here so that I could attend court in Hyderabad. Most of my cases will be heard here. If this is not the reason I have a bone to pick with Hal Soomro. I'd like to know who the bastard is with whom I supposed to have slept! The IG was very good to me all the while. He instructed the Superintendent to put me in the 'Acha Chakar.' If they don't get me out of here I'll fast to death.'

He was fanatically opposed to the Punjabis and said that he would die for Sindhu Desh.

I tell Rafiq Safi that we should also go on hunger strike. Rafiq Safi counsels patience. 'The IG is upset with us. We must cultivate Malik, our guard. May be he'll bring us some paper and pens and a few envelopes. We must tell the world about our conditions. There are 1500 political prisoners here. They must be made aware of our conditions. They can get us out by agitation. We must not lose heart.'

Anwar Shah says in English that we should be aware of Waheed as he always listens in on our conversation.

Waheed comes at midnight. I start talking to him. He tells me that the IG knows him well. 'I worked at his house for 2 months. One day he came out of his office, I saluted him. He spoke to me in Sindhi. I replied in Punjabi. He asked me where I was from. I told him that I came from Khushab. He was very happy that I was a Punjabi. He told me that I could come to him

whenever I needed anything. He is a friend of all Punjabis. Haider Zaman is also one of us. The IG once tipped me Rs.200. He has two wives, one from his family and the other from outside his biradari. He has four buffaloes as well.' I had to listen to this drivel just to keep in his good books.

I am awakened by the Alamdar who uses his stick to rouse me. I protest. He asks for my blanket. I refuse to hand it over. I am in the mood to resist. He goes & returns shortly with three other guards. They are armed with clubs. He asks me to give up my blanket. I scream at him. A guard with huge mustaches tells the Alamdar in Punjabi to bring me out of my cell. 'We'll teach him a lesson for being obdurate.'

Rafiq Safi intervenes. He tells them that I am within my rights to refuse. 'We are political prisoners. It is bitterly cold. We cannot sit on the bare floor. We'll freeze.'

He backs off. 'It is a question of our honour too. We can leave one blanket only.' We agree on this compromise. This is a victory.

The blanket is precious. Breakfast is consumed in relative comfort.

After breakfast three prisoners are made to clean the wards. Akbar Pawa is one of them. He is in bar fetters. He stumbles and falls. A guard hits him viciously with a baton. He is then made to carry heavy pots of water back & forth. He has been assigned the task of playing water carrier for the barracks. His shins are bleeding profusely. He comes to my cell. I tell him to sit down & rest. He tells me he used to be in the Kala Chakar. I ask the reason for the disturbances in the jail. He tells me that it was all because of an ailing political prisoner. He does not know the details. Suddenly the Alamdar spotted Pawa and shouted at him. Pawa turned pale. A barrage of sticks and slaps rain on this person. He is then taken away. His only fault a well deserved respite from the chore of cleaning.

At 11 A.M. Qalander Bakhsh Khoso is told that he has a visitor. We are all a bit envious of him. When he returns he is in seventh heaven. His walk has a lilt to it. He is carrying some stores with him. He asks the guards to distribute the booty of the visit amongst us. I get a banana, some peanuts and some sweets. I dig in. Anything to change the taste of my mouth. Rafiq Safi is more practical. He rations his bounty. He only eats his banana.

That night I spoke to Qalandar Baksh about his visit.

"My brother & father had come to see me. They were allowed to see me on the recommendation of the Commissioner Hyderabad Abdullah Memon."

I asked him about the outside world.

"They said that the MRD struggle was fizzling out. My gang was responsible for the first kidnapping in Sindh. We had many encounters with the police. We escaped by the Grace of God. Abdullah Memon wanted to see

us. We agreed so long as he came alone without a police guard. He came to our hide out. He said that if we surrendered we would be tried in a civil court and spared police brutality. We agreed and gave ourselves up to him. He handed over to the cops. They beat us for over a month. They hanged us upside down and pulled out our pubic hair. We were not allowed to sleep for several nights. Finally we were handed over to the military courts for trial. We were five in gang. I was sentenced by the army to 7 years and 40 stripes. Four cases are still spending in the military courts."

I asked him why he was in the Bund Ward.

His eyes filled with tears.

'I have been languishing here for 8 months. The rest of my gang are in the special 'Bund Ward' with Karaney Chandio. This fellow murdered a man called Zardari. It was a crime of passion committed because of Chandio's love for a young boy. The special ward is much better equipped. It has Sui Gas and the flush system. I was lodged here. One day we were joined by two prisoners from Mirpur Khas. They were accused of petty crimes. They stayed with us for 2 months. They instigated us to try & escape from prison. They said that if we could get some assistance from the outside, escape would become possible. They said that an attack at the Mani during a visit would clinch the wire. They made us writing letters to our friends. They were intelligence officers. They informed the Superintendent. We were attacked that evening by an armed guard. They searched the place and found the cellers. We were fettered & chained. The superintendent slapped the two under cover agents for affect and ordered them into the court ward. We were beaten regularly for over 3 months till we dropped down unconscious. We went on hunger strike for 10 days. We were dragged to the Mani & beaten till we agreed to be force fed. My four comrades succumbed. I refused. I was taken to the Bund Ward. They were sent to the Special Ward.

Suddenly a song sang out. There was a great deal of pain in the voice. I asked Rafiq who was singing. He said it was Hamid Khaskheli. He sang for half an hour. We were literally a captive audience. The song was like an Oasis in our desolate and baren world.

Malik Jailor has arrived. He tells me that the IG loves this jail. He wants to put all the notorious criminals in this ward, so that he can keep an eye on them. He warns me about Alamdar Sher. I ask him for a pen and some paper and four envelopes. He says 'No problem.'

The next morning I hand over one blanket to Sher. He tells me that the IG will be on his round and that I must hide my blanket.

Four prisoners are cleaning the ward. Whistles sound. I ask Irshad Jailor who are lodged in the special ward. He tells me that the ward houses Nawab Yousuf Talpur, Ashiq Jatoi, Khalid Ghallo and others.

Fifteen minutes later a whistle sounds in our ward. The IG and his entourage walk past our cells.

I engage a prisoner in conversation. He is Anwar Fauji. He is a military man. He says he is serving a sentence after being court martialed. He has been assigned as a 'Bardashti' to Nawab Talpur. He tells me about his 'boss.'

'He is a real political prisoner. He has several visitors each day and food from his home. He does not meet the riff raff. He stays aloof.'

I tell him to talk to Rafiq Safi who in turn tells Anwar to convey his respects to Nawab Talpur. Rafiq Safi says that, 'Please convey to Nawab Sahib that he should try and make efforts for our release from the Bund Ward.'

During the MRD struggle thousands of political activists were locked up. Amongst them were some army jawans who were sent to prison with the sole purpose of infiltrating our ranks and providing information to military intelligence. Anwar Fauji could be one of them.

Rafiq Safi tells me that the IG is on the take. He is trying to sell some of the toilet fittings. These are expensive. 'The cost of converting these barracks into 'B' Class jails could cost over 50 lakhs or 5 million.'

I asked Waheed about the new moves being made vis a vis our barracks. He says that the jail authorities are expecting another 50 prisoners from Khairpur and Sukker. 'Things are going to liven up and get hot.'

Hamid Khaskheli is singing again. When he finishes his song I ask him about his case.

'I am from Tando Mohammad Khan. My father is a motor mechanic. When I was very young my father was employed as a driver by Ejaz Ali Talpur. My father was grossly exploited. He worked ungodly hours and was paid a pittance. We could barely make ends meet. We were buried under the burden of debts. My father asked for a raise which was refused out of hand. My father left Talpur and earned his former employers wrath and enmity. Eight years ago my elder brother and I were implicated in false cases by Ejaz Talpur and we were bailed out after great difficulties. Our father was dragged through the courts and his reputation suffered. When we were released, new cases were concocted. I was very young. I knew that I was being falsely victimised. I decided that if the jail was my fate, I had to commit a crime. I ran away from home. I was soon arrested for armed robbery in Hyderabad. I was tortured. The CIA staff told me that I would be released if I shared part of the loot with them. After my release I had to keep paying them off with half of what I stole. They were greedy. They

arrested me again after 6 months. I was sentenced by a military court to 10 lashes and 3 years imprisonment. I was locked up at Nara Jail from where I managed to escape. I went straight to the CIA inspectors house in Karachi and lived under his protection. His name was Noora Ahmed Shaikh. I stayed there for a month. I returned to Hyderabad where I was arrested. I was interrogated for over two weeks. I was sent here and beaten till I fell unconscious. I was then put into the ward where I was repeatedly beaten for 15 days.

That night Malik, the sepoy came over without the pen and paper but full of excuses.

I told Rafiq Safi about his intrasigence. Rafiq said 'Money talks.' Anwar Shah promised to help. He had hidden eighty rupees in a cellophane packet placed inside a plastic bottle containing pure ghee or frozen oil. He asked the Alamdar to fetch the bottle from the stores and promised to give him some of the ghee. Alamdar Sher agreed. The bottle was produced. Anwar Shah sent me Rs. 20 unwrapped in Surah Yaseen.

The renovation work was continuing. Some outsiders were watching the work. I asked them who they were. They said that they had come to inspect the toilet fittings as these had been sold to their Seth. by the IG for 1 lakh Rupees.

Bakht Khawar has gone on hunger strike. His demand is release from the Bund Ward. He is being cajoled and then threatened of but to no avail.

That evening I gave Malik the Rs.20. He said that the money was not necessary. However it was useful and pocketed it.

He returned the following morning with 4 envelopes, some paper and a ball point pen. He warned me that I should conceal my arms of literacy as there was always the threat of a sudden search.

I told him that we would write letters in his presence and that he can take these and post them. We did so and sent our welfare off to our families. I concealed the pen, an envelope and a sheet of paper under my blanket.

The following night I spoke to Rano Dharejo. I was interested to know how he had escaped from Sukker Jail. He said that he was a friend of the notorious dacoit of upper Sindh Nadir Jaskani who was killed in 1985. Nadir Jaskani & Paroo Chandio had planned to escape. 'I was asked to join them. After total Nadir told me to get ready to escape. We walked towards the special ward where Ali Gohar Chandio and others were cutting down some trees. These trees were not too heavy. We pulled them towards the outer wall, Ali Gohar, Paroo and myself kept on pulling the tree. Just then we heard some firing. We leaned the trees against the wall. We used some cloth to climb onto the branches of the trees and began to climb. We were above

the platform that was used in the past to display hanged prisoners. We pimped onto the platform. Paroo jumped as well but he did not use the platform. As a result he fractured his foot. Some of Paroo's relatives were waiting for us. They were armed with 7mm rifles. They opened fire to give us cover. We only had knives and an axe for arms. The armed guards took position and sprayed us with bullets. We ran through the fields, better shelter. Six escaped convicts running towards freedom. When we got near the Sukker Cement Factory we stopped. A truck happened to be parked here. We pointed the rifle at the driver and hijacked the truck. We sped off. We drove along the river cross country. After about 10-15 miles of a bumpy ride we came on to an unmade stretch of road. We stopped the truck here and started to loot passing vehicles on the National Highway. We collected some 15-20 thousand rupees in half an hour. We went back to the rough and sped away in our gateway truck. We had our dinner in a village that night. A village elder helped Paroo and put a wooden splint on his foot. We left the village that night.'

Rafiq Safi said that after the escape, "the jail siren wailed continuously. Superintendent Abbasi summoned me to the Mani and asked me to draft a telegram.

Phone calls had already been made to the DMLA's office and Sukker Police H.Q.

The jail was surrounded by contingents of the police and army. The top brass had descended on the jail. Poor Abbasi! he was shaking with fear. I was consoling him. We inspected the scene of the jail break. We found some chadars swaying in the wind, some shoes. We asked the guards why they hadn't fired. They said that they were raw recruits."

The exciting tale was cut short by a whistle. A jailor had come in and he was persuading Bakht Khawar to break his hunger strike. He refused.

Anwar Shah told me about instances of torture in Khairpur Jail.

"In 1983 crimes against humanity were perpetuated at Khairpur Jail. Bahadur Ansari and Gul Mohammad Khosa are eyewitnesses. The Superintendent Aoqaash Ahmed Shaikh was the arch villain of the price. He used Subedar Gul Mohd Zangejo as his henchman. (This man was killed in an encounter with escaping prisoners in 1986.) He would strip a prisoner and shore a stick up his arms. This gave him perverse pleasure. Sometimes he would force a prisoner to trigger a fellow inmate. The prisoners went on hunger strike. They were led by Bahadur Ansari, Shareef Gadani, Meer Khuso, Qaim Suhag, Gul Mohd Khoso and Andal Koori.

IG Noor Illahi Shaikh descended on us. He was very shrewd and cunning. He knew the weaknesses of the dacoits. He told Shareef Gadani that since they were both courageous men they should shake hands. Shareef Gadani

fell for his ruse and gave up his strike. All the others followed. The IG left and returned with orders for the transfer of all the ring leaders. Some were sent to other prisons and others were locked in the Bund Ward. The prisoners protested. They broke down the barrack doors. They made Zangejo a hostage and climbed upto the roof. The jail was surrounded by police and army personnel. The seige continued for 30 hours. I was responsible for saving Zangejo's life. I was not involved in the agitation. The prisoners respected me as I am a Syed. They asked for me. I went to them. I helped them negotiate with the jail administration. The talks succeeded. The prisoners went back into their cells. A little later reinforcements arrived. The prisoners were removed from their cells and fettered. They were stripped and beaten and then shored into the Bund Ward. I was not spared either. They hit all of us with their staves in a frenzied free for all. A prisoner broke his hand, another had his skull broken yet another lay unconscious. It was the month of June. It was very hot. We were parched. Some prisoners were passed out in thirst. One prisoner, Syed Imam Shah, died. This horrible scene was watched by a SMLA, IG Jails, D.C. Khairpur and the Superintendent. They grinned every time a prisoner yelled in pain or grimaced."

"Imam Shah's brother Sabri Shah was also in the Bund Ward. The half dead prisoners were moved by the sight of the dead Imam Shah. They began to batter the doors of the barracks and finally succeeded in pulling down all the barriers. Hand to hand fighting began. The prisoners got to the body of Imam Shah and seized it.

The mob grew violent. The guards fled. The prisoners wrapped the body in Hazrat Ali's flag and brought out a procession. When it reached the "Chakar" the procession become a charged welling. The flag was raised and the prisoners sand a dirge. The atmosphere was laden with emotion. They were demanding justice. The murderers of Imam Shah must be punished, they cried. The SMLA Khairpur was one of the murderers. The prisoners were demanding that FIR should be registered against these criminals. The agitation lasted for 20 hours. Tear gassing and firing continued. Many prisoners were injured. After 24 hours the DC Khairpur climbed atop the main roof and told us through a microphone that the demand of the prisoners had been accepted. An FIR would be lodged. He requested us to hand over the body for postmortem. The prisoners asked for some guarantee. The DC placed a Quran on his head and gave his word. The prisoners relented. The body was handed over. The jail authorities acted swiftly. They got a certificate issued by the jail doctors that Imam Shah had

died of a heat stroke, and handed over the body to his relatives. They were ordered to bury his body post haste. When the press and politicians raised their voice against this injustice, the Govt. ordered an inquiry. Needless to say this has still not seen the light of day. Sabir Ali Shah went mad with grief. He would hit his head against the prison wall. Many prisoners were transferred.

Rafiq Safi told me that he had written off to Amnesty International and other human right organisation, with details of this gruesome incident. He had also written a price on this whole ugly episode.

The following morning we were told by Muqdoom Ghulamullah that Bakht Khawar was unconscious. A doctor was sent for. This was Dr Fazal a prisoner who was in prison for the murder of two brothers. He was from Nawabshah. His two wives and daughters were also in prison for various crimes. He tried to give Bakht Khawar a glucose drip but Khawar would not allow it. Some prisoners were brought in and they cleaned the ward. I was told that a new superintendent Auqaash Sheikh was expected.

Rafiq Safi said that he knew this gentleman well.

The round began. Auqaash Sheikh went from cell to cell. He came to my cell as well. One of his minions introduced me to him. He asked me what I had done in Sukker Jail. I told him that I was a victim of Superintendent Durrani's sadistic methods and so were all the other prisoners. He nodded and went over to Bakht Khawar's cell. He had the doors opened and stepped in. He began to abuse Bakht Khawar and kicked him about. He ordered the deputy to arrange for Bakht Khawar's transfer.

After the round the guards thrashed the half dead Bakht Khawar. They carried him out of the ward. We knew that he had been taken to the dreaded special Bund Ward.

Abdul Qadir Khokhar was a great yarn spinner. He had a rapt audience. He had quite a large anthology of fairy tales which featured djinns, and giants and kings. The stories helped us while away our endless time.

The following day a new prisoner was brought to our ward. He was badly beaten by the guards. He lost consciousness. He told us the next day that he was Dhani Bakhsh Rajpar and had been transferred here from Nara Jail.

Bakht Khawar was brought back to the bund ward. He was not locked up in the cell. He came over to my cell and sat down. I asked him why he had called off his hunger strike. He told me his story.

"After I was taken away from here, I had a visitor. It was Auqaash. He told me that my demands would be met if I gave up the hunger strike. I refused. Shahid Jailor was sent to see me. He was a friend of mine. He pleaded with me. He said that they would not contravene the IG's orders

but they would not lock me up in a cell in the bund ward. I would have relative freedom. I agreed."

He looked extremely emaciated. Bakht Khawar was abused by the prisoners for calling off his strike. It was his personal decision and one that had obviously caused him some pain.

The following day Makoro Panhwar went on hunger strike. His demands included transfer from the Bund Ward and removal of the bar fetters.

At noon the Alamdar and a blacksmith came to Rafiq Safi's cell. They went in and removed his bar fetters. It was 28 November 1983. I was hoping that I too would be given this treatment but invain. Rafiq Safi consoled me. He was obviously ashamed at the preferential treatment he had just received.

Three hours later Rafiq Safi was informed that he had visitors. He was unshaven and dressed in the prison uniform. He was taken away in this state. Half an hour later we heard slogans being raised from the direction of the jail offices. Rafiq Safi returned. His face was flushed. Some guards were carrying parcels.

I asked Rafiq who his visitors were. He told me that his mother and sister had come to see him.

"My mother couldn't recognise me. She kept saying that I wasn't her son and that they had murdered her son. She fainted. Our time was up. I left them in the Mari. As I came out slogans of 'Jeeye Bhutto,' and 'Rafiq Safi Zindabad' rent the air. These slogans were interspersed with shouts of 'Gen. Zia Murdabad' and 'Release political prisoners' from the Bund Ward. Some prisoners scaled the gates and came over to see me. The guards hurried me away."

"Unfortunately during my meeting we had a CID official sitting with us. I could not find out about the movement. The visit was made possible through the recommendation of the Chief Secretary NWFP Mr. Isani. My family had made several abortive attempts to see me. They were worried for my life."

It was obviously Rafiq Safi's day.

He asked the guards to distribute 'Chilgozas' (Nuts) to the prisoners. Each prisoners got ten nuts. I got a few biscuits as well.

Makoro Panhwar was still on a hunger strike. At 10 that evening, another prisoner was brought to our ward. He was not in bar fetters. He was a fat fellow with typical Sindhi beard and mustaches. He was pressed into service and began sweeping the yard. When he came towards my cell, I asked him his name. He was Khem Chand, from Tharparkar. He said that he was a big landowner. He was sentenced by a a summary military court to three

years imprisonment and a 5 lakh fine, for land fraud. The Alamdar shouted at him and he skulked away.

In Sindh the first thing you ask a person who you have just met is his caste. When Qalandar Bakhsh asked Khem Chand who he was, the poor man said he was a Hindu. There was an uproar. Qalandar was upset that a Hindu was entrusted with the water pitchers. This was stuff that communal riots are made of. The prisoners were adamant that the pitchers be refilled. This was done to pacify their narrow mindedness.

We were eating our meal. Khem Chand had to wash his own plates in the tub. He was perturbed. As he passed my cell I said, 'Maharaj, don't worry, this is a passing phase. It will be over soon.'

Khem Chand was in a difficult situation. He was our 'Bardashti' and the prisoners resented this. When he heard my words of consolation he was overwhelmed. He started to weep. I said:

"Our religion teaches us brotherhood. You are a citizen of this country. These people are illiterates, wrapped in prejudices and superstition. You must ignore their taunts."

He thanked me and moved on.

Makoro was still on hunger strike.

That evening I decided to address the prisoners. I had to scream.

"Our religion does not preach hatred towards other faiths. Islam allows us to sip of the same water that a 'Kafir' has drank from. Khem Chand is a Pakistani. He is a fellow prisoner. We must treat him like a human being."

The guards tried to force feed Makoro but to no avail. The deputy ordered the guards to beat him. I asked Piral Khan Dasti to find out how Makoro was faring. He told me that he was semi conscious. He was in agony.

The next day Khem Chand had visitors. He returned after 20 minutes. He gave me two bananas and two oranges. I asked him about his visitors. He told me it was his son who had come to visit. He then told me that he was assigned the role of 'Bardashti' because he refused to pay the Deputy Rs.10,000. I told him not to pay the bribe.

Khem Chand was treated like a slave. He had to sweep the yard, perform 'laipa'. He was not allowed to rest all day.

Makoro continued his hunger strike. A doctor was called. He injected milk into his anus. Makoro regained consciousness. He abused the doctor. The prisoners joined him. Then they began to taunt Makoro. They said 'If you had to take milk up your anus, you shouldn't have gone on strike. Shame on you.' The following day he was shifted from the ward, humiliated and broken.

Khem Chand asked the Superintendent to transfer him to the office as a Munshi because he could read and write. The Superintendent ordered his

deputy to transfer him to the kitchen. Khem Chand pleaded that the work load in the kitchen would be too much for him. The Superintendent lost his temper and ordered Khem Chand to the bund ward for 15 days in fetters. He left. The Deputy carried out the orders. He was deprived of his blanket and fruit and the commarband of his shalwar. He was miserable.

I consoled him. The rest of the prisoners were overjoyed. Khem Chand was still a slave. He cleaned the yard. Washed the floor. It was cold. He was incapacitated by the chains but he kept on. If he fattened he was beaten. The poor man wept constantly. I told the guards to fear the wrath of God. They were oblivious to all my warnings. Khem Chand went through the week in this manner.

On the seventh day his fetters were removed and he was allowed visitors. He returned after an hour. His son had come to see him. He had brought Rs. 10,000 with him which he gave to the deputy. The deputy had ordered his release from the bund ward. This was soon done. Khem Chand was also broken by the system and succumbed.

Second week of December, 1983, Friday - 1 P.M.

The Alanidar comes to my cell with the blacksmith. My fetters are removed.

The same day, new prisoners are herded in. They are ruthlessly beaten till they fall down bleeding and unconscious. The entire ward is filled with heart rending screams. Rafiq Safi and I raised slogans. Anwar Shah screamed 'Jeeye Bhutto.'

That evening Haleem Dayo tells Rafiq Safi not to interfere in the happenings. He is five feet tall. He is a cripple. He has only one hand and one foot. He is serving a life sentence for murder. He has served time in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukker and Khairpur. He has always been in the bund ward. He is a drug addict and gets his supply from the police guard. He has been through torture but does not seem to be affected. He has always sided with the underdog and is a victim of many prison riots. This speciality consists of scaling up a tree and refusing to come down till his demands are met. It was because of him that the Superintendent, Karachi Jail, had the trees, in the prison compound, cut down. He was always treated like a VIP.

We were removed from the bund ward and kept in another barrack which had served as a dining hall for the prisoners of the Hyderabad Tribunal Case. That night I spoke at great length with Rafiq Safi.

A prisoner threw me a newspaper as he was cleaning the yard. He wanted to speak to Rafiq Safi. They spoke to each other in Sindhi.

Rafiq told me that this prisoner was Ibrahim Jhakro, whose three brothers were his fellow inmates in Karachi.

'I had given them legal advice. Jhakro wanted to return the favour. He told me that Yousuf Talpur's cell is just beyond this wall and that he would be happy to convey any messages to him.'

The newspaper was a treat. It was the Daily Ibrat, a Hyderabad paper. This was the first newspaper we had seen in over a month.

Auqaash Sheikh was on his rounds. He came over to see us. I told him that I had not been allowed any visitors for over a month. He said that this would be looked into. Rafiq Safi wanted to use the money in his account for purchases. This was also allowed. We had about 700 Rupees between us. We gave Alamdar Sher a list of items we requested. The following day we got our stock of ghee and sugar. However, no onions and tomatoes!

At eleven that morning Ibrahim Jhakro climbed up a tree and threw us some parcels. The parcel contained tea, dry milk, onions and 'Ibrat.'

Rafiq Safi read out the paper to us. The news was bleak. The momentum of the movement was slowing down.

Anwar Shah cooked for us.

That evening Ghulam Mustafa Korai appeared as was his routine atop a tree. Rafiq Safi was scouting around for some chink or hole in the wall through which he could carry on a conversation with Korai. He found one. This was the hole through which all the refuse of the cells flowed. Korai was informed of his discovery and he came along to the spot. He told me that Pir Moazzam was also with him and wanted to talk to us. Rafiq Safi crouched near the drain as though he was urinating and had a conversation with the two of them. Later Rafiq Safi told me that he had told them to apply pressure on the jail administration to secure our release from the 'Bund Ward.' He was told that the Superintendent had promised to transfer us to the special ward soon. As a first step Rafiq Safi's fetters had been removed.

The following day we received one and a half kilo milk and half a kilo of meat courtesy Abdul Shakoor Advocate. He promised to send us a stock every day. We thanked him via the Muqaddam who had brought us this rare treat.

Korai came to talk to us again. He said that SBFP students had decided to break open the 'Bund Ward' and free us. Rafiq Safi said that we would gladly accept their offer. I was not too sure. I told Korai not to take an emotional decision. There was no point in creating more tension. I wanted to use political means to emerge from this nightmare. He was quite upset at what he thought was a defeatist attitude.

Auqaf Sheikh came on his rounds. We asked him to have us released from the Bund Ward. He told us that we have to serve our three month sentence. He did promise to transfer us to the special ward.

As soon as he lept we heard screams from our ward. A prisoner was being beaten with lathis and shoes. Deputy Rahim was supervising this brutality. The other prisoners protested as this barbaric act. Within seconds the protest turned into a full scale agitation. The prisoners rattled their bars and raised slogans. The guards retreated. The prisoners stripped themselves naked and flung their clothes out of the Bund Ward.

The three of us visited the prisoner who was being beaten. He was Abdul Qadir Khokhar. He was lying naked on his cell floor. He was bleeding profusely. He was unconscious.

"Is he alive Maulana?" asked Qalandar Bakhsh Khosa.

I placed my hand on his feet. They were still warm. I shook him. He came to.

'Water, please water.'

I rushed to the earthern pitcher and got him some water. He took two sips and lay back.

Qalandar Khosa told us that Abdul Qadir's crime was that he had requested the superintendent to remove him from the Bund Ward.

When food was served, the entire ward refused to eat. A hunger strike was on. The prisoners raised slogans: Haleem Dayo abused everyone. He started with the IG and went down the ranks to the Alamdar!

Ibrahim Jhakar looked in from the tree top, curious to know the cause of then rumpus. I told him.

I was chatting with Bahadur Ansari when Alamdar Sher made an appearance. This presence was greeted by a volley of abuses. He was stunned. He left in a hurry.

Rafiq Safi was busy at his communication console. He was talking to Korai. We decided to support the other prisoners. The slogans were being raised with full throated ease.

That evening our food was not brought to us by the cook. We knew that the jail administration was trying to suppress the flow of information.

We could hear slogans outside the Bund Ward. The virus had spread.

The Subedar of the Jails Mohyuddin arrived. He told us that there was no law in our country.

'As a new recruit I was posted to Nara Jail. The officer I was assigned to was a Punjabi. He was a severe task master. He made me sweat and run around all day. One day I decided to ask him what rules apply to sepoys. He hit me on my chest and told me that the only law applied was his word.'

He tried to pacify us but did not succeed. He left.

It was January. Despite the freezing cold the prisoners walked about completely in the nude. They raised slogans against the civil and military authorities.

I went to see Khokar. He was still semi conscious. He was lying naked on the cold cell floor. He was in great agony. I noticed that the skin on his waist had split horribly. He was still bleeding. I could not bear to see him in this state. I turned away.

After 'Total' was called, Haleem Dayo orchestrated the prisoners in a new sound of sloganeering. We were curious to know why Qureishi Jailor had come into the ward. Dayo said he had brought a message from Auqaash. The Superintendent had requested the prisoners to call off their agitation in the name of Sindhi fellow feeling. He said that Punjabi and Mohajirs were after his job and 'this agitation would go against' him.

Dayo told Qureishi to tell Auqaash that the Sindhis consides him a traitor. He also said that the decision had to have the sanction of the majority. The prisoners were thrilled with Dayo's response.

The prisoners wanted an apology from Auqaash. They demanded immediate medical aid for Khokhar and release from the Bund Ward.

The slogans continued. Qureishi returned. He tendered an apology on behalf of his superior officer and agreed to supply medical aid to Khokhar. However, the demand for release from the Bund Ward was dismissed out of hand.

Dayo told him to get lost. He raised slogans and emerged as the leader of the prisoners.

At midnight Auqaash entered the ward. He swore on the Quran.

"I am your Sindhi brother. Please forgive me. I cannot release you from the Bund Ward. However, I will allow you a couple of hours respite each day."

The prisoners were not impressed. He had tried the same play with them in Khairpur and they had fallen for it. Once bitten twice shy. However, the Sindhi prisoners honoured their tradition. Even an enemy who uses the Quran as a shield is forgiven. The hunger strike was abandoned. Auqaash left.

Food was served and blankets distributed. The prisoners got into their clothes. Khokhar was treated and rations released from the stores.

That night I was visited by a horrible nightmare. I dreamt that it was the Day of Judgement. God was sitting in his court. Our actions were being weighed. The sun is blazing hot. Our bodies are charred with the heat but we are all still alive. Yells of agony can be heard from all around. Millions of people are in this assembly. They are all naked but unaware of their nudity. A group of women are pleading for water. They are offering half their good deeds for a sip of water. No body is bothered. I see Auqaash. His lips are hanging to the ground. His body is horribly burnt. He is surrounded by people. Most of them are maimed. Some are decapitated.

They are chanting 'O God give us justice. This man played with our lives. He played with our youth and stole it from us. He tortured us. He implicated horrible punishments on us. Do not spare him. His word was law on earth. Give us justice in the hereafter."

I woke up in cold sweat.

After breakfast, the following morning I spoke to Korai through the 'drain telephone'. He told me that the political prisoners had staged a rally against the jail authorities containing violence against us. Resolutions were passed, in which the jail authorities were warned against their atrocities. The prisoners trheatened to go on strike if the problem we were facing was not resolved. I told Korai of the events in our ward.

There is soem tension amongst the ranks. The Superintendent has accused the guards of complicity with the prisoners. They have been dubbed as being 'soft' on us. The guards are furious. Irshad sepoy informed us about this state of affairs. He seems very upset.

Rafiq Safi has visitors. The prisoner who has visitors suddenly goes up in the esteem of his inmates. Rafiq Safi's guests have brought him cakes and dry fruit. These are consumed in small rations.

Towards the end of January we were shifted to the special ward. We were in relative luxury here. Our toilets were clean and the flush worked. However, we could not stroll outside the main gate. The walls had many ears. Political prisoners gathered around the chinks and conversed with us everyday.

One night at 2 A.M. the gate was flung open and a voice in Sindhi told us to collect our luggage. We woke with a start. Siraj Sujal entered with four comrades. Jam Saqi was also with them.

We greeted them. We were apprehensive as well. Jam told us that they had been brought here because they were taking their examinations. Jam had his own heater with him which we used to boil water for tea.

Word of Jam's arrival spread like wild fire. Hundreds gathered outside our walls. They wanted to meet their valiant leader. Abu Bakr Zardari, Talib Jhabkar and Amin Khushk climbed the gate to catch a glimpse of Jam Saqi. He went out to greet them. Slogans erupted. The jail authorities were frightened by the response.

Auqaash visited as post haste. He proposed that Jam and his friends be transferred elsewhere. Jam rejected this proposal out of hand. The other comrades Masood Bhatti, Niaz Bhatti and Nazir Lashari of the SPSF and Siraj Sujal and Nazakat Nizamani of the Awami Tehreek responded identically to Auqaash's proposal.

Auqaash said that apart from the days of the exams they would only be allowed out twice a week. This was acceptable.

We were now a permidable force. Nine of us together. The other political prisoners took greater notice of our plight and often came to see us for political guidance. There had been quite a metamorphosis.

Jam told us how the political prisoners in Sukker had reacted to our transfer. Apparently they had gone on an indefinite hunger strike and had had several bloody clashes with the jailors. Firing and tear gassing was resorted to and the political prisoners were kept locked up for days.

On the third day of the struggle, fifty political prisoners broke down the barrack wall and marched towards the other barracks. The walls came tumbling down and the locks were smashed. Siraj Sujal told us that Amanullah Advocate stayed aloof from the agitation. When we reached his cell we decided not to break his lock. He deserved to stay confined. The man pleaded with us. We took pity on him and released him.'

Jam Saqi said that the ordinary prisoners also went on hunger strike. 'The jail has been completely liberated. Visitors stroll in and meet us inside the jail. Prisoners walk around at will and submit themselves to the warders when they feel like it."

On the 1st of February we had a new inmate. He was Shahnawaz Junejo of Sanghar. He was convicted in the Hur case and had served three years in Karachi and Hyderabad. He told us that he had been transferred here from Nara Jail. He had been arrested after the clash at Shahdadpur. Many others had also been picked up including Fida Hussain Dero, Zahoor Alam Rind, Altaf Rind and Mujahid Alam. 'They are here with me.'

I asked Shahnawaz the reasons for his transfer here. He said that over 50 political prisoners had got together in Nara and began to demand facilities that were in the jail manual. These were refused. 'We protested and as a result we were herded out of there and sent here.'

On the 3rd of February we were in the news. In its issue of that day, the Daily Jang had printed a column by Abid Zuberi in which he had written about our travails in the Bund Ward.

Jam Saqi was a voracious reader and was able to get copies of Jang and Ibrat delivered to him daily.

On the 4th we completed our three months sentence and were allowed to walk about the prison grounds. Jam, Rafiq Safi, Anwar Shah and myself visited Noor Mohd Thaibo of Dadu in the 'B' Class ward. He greeted us with great affection. We met Babu Ghulam Hussain of Thatta. We went to the hospital and visited with the famous writer Muhib Shah and Anwar Abbas Naqvi. We called on Abu Bakr Zardari of the PNP in the Chakar. Shamsuddin Memon JUI's Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Khosa, NDP's Amin Khushk, PPP's Alam Shah Bokhari, Ataur Rehman Memon, Munir Randhawa, Mustafa Korai, Maula Bakhsh Chandio and Awami Tehreek's

Yusuf Karano, Abdullah Salah, Dr. Munir Bhurgari met us with great warmth. This was a historic moment. Our political fortitude had succeeded in pulling down the artificial barriers imposed on us by our tormentors.

The following day we went across to visit the 'Pir Barracks'. This was so called because it housed the political 'Pirs' of Sindh. These included Pir Mazharul Haq, his brothers Pir Mukarram-ul-Haq and Pir Moazzam and their cousins Pir Fida and Pir Saleem.

Pir Mukarram told us that he was the executive director of the Islamabad Printing Corporation when he heard of the brutal army action in Sindh. He resigned and came away. He was arrested when he was leading a procession. His spirit was high. He apologized for their inability to get us released from the Bund Ward earlier. He said that the prisoners were preoccupied by another incident.

'On 11th November a prisoner in our barracks fell ill. We called for a doctor. He did not come. We broke out of the barracks and raised slogans. Other prisoners did the same. Sirens were sounded. We had negotiations with the jail administration and stressed the need for proper medical facilities. We were back to the ravaged barracks. At 5 A.M. the next morning we were shifted to the chakar by an armed contingent. We raised slogans. The political prisoners joined us and broke out of their barracks. We kidnapped two warders and held them hostage. We raised slogans the whole day. We were tear gassed and fired upon. That evening the IG picked up the Quran and pleaded for a dialogue with us. Pir Saleem Jan, who was convicted in a bomb attack case and I went in for negotiations with the IG. The IG played dirty. We were locked up and were not allowed to move about as freely as before. All our visits were cancelled. A heavy police guard was posted. The barracks were cramped with political prisoners. The toilets were not functioning. We were in great distress. A number of prisoners fell ill. Our food rations were curtailed and we were given the same food as the ordinary prisoners. Thirty eight prisoners were implicated in cases of attempted jail break. Even those like Abu Bakr Zardari who were not involved were implicated. We held on for a week in this state, we then decided to go on hunger strike. It was only after this action that we regained some of our privileges.'

Advocate Memon was under great stress. His brothers were trying for his release but to no avail. The army refused to set him free.

"I had an autographed photograph of Mr. Bhutto. The people of Bhan Saeedabad were not too keen on the MRD struggle. One day I announced that on such and such a time at the chowk I would show the people this photograph. I also said that this photograph would lead a procession.

On the day the people turned up and showered petals on the photograph. Many saluted this picture and joined the procession. An armed clash with the police ensued. The police snatched the photograph. The army believes that the photographs was used by me to create disaffection and to incite the mob to violence. I was sentenced to one year along with the Pirs.'

Rafiq Safi and Shahnawaz Junejo visited the A class prison where Nabi Bakhsh Bhurgari, Ashiq Jatoi, Nawab Yusuf Talpur, Fida Hussain Dero, Zahoor Alam Rind were housed.

Our ward was now a more pleasant place. At night Rafiq Safi and I played chess. Whoever lost had to pay a penalty. Ten pushups. After a game, Jam Saqi would dole out some dry fruit to us. Jam would make breakfast for all of us. He refused to cede to our requests and took special pride in his new occupation.

I was allowed visitors after a period of three months. My brother brought me a lot of vegetables, fruit, sugar, biscuits. Shahnawaz Junejo's son came every day. He would often invite us to share his 'Palla' fish.

Sam Saqi, wanted to stay on in Hyderabad after his exams but he was forced to go back to Sukker. We felt his absence. This void was soon filled by the appearance of Comrade Ali Ahmed Junejo, the son of a former Home Secretary Mohd. Khan Junejo. He was a man with a keen sense of humour. He was a great yarn spinner and told a lie with a straight face. He was an Ex-DSP. He was charged in 1979 when he led a procession for the release of Mr. Bhutto and raised slogans against Martial Law.

Abid Zuberi, who was in hospital because of a heart ailment was sent back to jail after his letter was published in 'Jang.' He was very upset. He managed to get 'B' class status after a long time. His closest friend was Anwar Abbas Nagir who wept a great deal. Whenever, his wife came to see him he was a sight which had to be seen to bebelieved.

In March 1984, a judge of the Sindh High Court Justice Naeemuddin visited the jail. The Superintendent had warned us not to stray from our barracks that day. Pir Moazzam, Mustafa Korai, Siraj Sujal, Masood Bhatti, Pir Ijaz Nazir Lashari, Aftab Imdad Chandio broke out of their ward and got to where the Judge was. They invited him for lunch at the Bund Ward. He consented. He was given a rundown of the atrocities committed by the jail administration on us.

In May 1984, the prisoners of conscience went on hunger strike. They wanted their cases transferred to the civil court. They had not been presented before any court for the last 10 months. They attached the Bund Ward and freed a number of prisoners. They kidnapped and held as hostages two guards as well.

At nine that evening a raiding party assembled. They opened fire injuring several prisoners. The IG Jails took recourse to the Quran and asked for peace. This move was repudiated by the prisoners. Many prisoners were forcibly dragged and beaten. They were put into chains and fetters and shut in cells in the Bund Ward.

We were shifted that day from the Special Ward to the B class jail. Zafar Leghari's brothers Asif and Murad were our new cell mates. They were very talkative. They were well entrenched with the jail authorities and spent a lot of time with them. There was a cash nexus between the two. Their visitors met them in the jail offices. They were very insecure in the jail. They would weep every time some political prisoner was released. Their brother had met the Governor to plead for their early release. It was soon after this meeting that they won their freedom.

Alam Shah Bokhari wrote a panagyric to the IG in which he tried to paint himself as an innocent who always cooperated with the prison authorities. The letter was meant to ingratiate himself with the IG. When word leaked out about this letter, Bokhari was snubbed by us as a turncoat.

In May 1984 we witnessed a scene that has no parallel in the annals of our history. There were a number of political prisoners who had been awarded stripes by the Summary Military Court. Their sentences ran out before Eid-ul-Fitr. The prisoners wanted to be lashed before the advent of Ramzan. Fifteen prisoners from the PPP, Hari Committee, Awami Tehreek and the PSF were involved. They wrote out an application in which they said that as the military claims that it never flogs anyone during Ramzan, their sentences should be carrried out post haste. The military authorities ignored this request and said that the sentences would be carried out whenever it suited them.

The prisoners went on hunger strike. The military authorities had to retract. A colonel and major arrived on the scene at 4 P.M. and summoned the 15 leaders. The prisoners had to be administered a total of 200 stripes. Word spread. The prisoners were stripped. We rushed to the scene and stood outside the Mari gate. We rattled bars and charged at the gates to show our disgust and anger.

Each prisoner was pulled out and flogged brutally. The prisoners remained composed and raised slogans for the restoration of democracy and against the military regime. We responded to the slogans. When they emerged they were all drenched in blood. The flesh on the backs and buttocks hung in bloody lumps. Their expressions were serene.

During the flogging the major and colonel served as sadistic cheer leaders. They kept talking their men to use more force. The two men who

used the lashes were Irshad and Akhtar. The example of fortitude set by these anonymous prisoners will live for ever in our minds.

When these leaders left the Mani they raised slogans in favour of the MRD and against the regime of 'Generals and Colonels.' They were taken in the form of a procession to the 'Acha Chakar' by a politically charged mob. The leaders addressed the political prisoners briefly. We pledged our loyalty to them and expressed our sentiments of solidarity.. We vowed to fight against imperialism and its paid stooges to our last breath. The flogged prisoners were garlanded and showered with currency notes. Their wounds were looked to and medication provided. Most of them developed high temperature through shock and trauma. Their pain was shared and their heroic behaviour was imprinted on our minds forever.

Four of these prisoners were kept in prison even after their sentences had expired. Their dream of being recruited with their family during Eid was dashed to prices. This was the first example of prisoners submitting themselves, voluntarily, to the lash.

Return to Karachi Central Jail

Towards the end of June 1984, I was suddenly despatched to Karachi Central Jail, by train. I was assigned a separate cell in ward No.20, at the Karachi Central Jail. I was warmly greeted by the inmates. There were some new faces here. They included Ayaz Samoon, Sadiq Umrani, Zahid Hussain, Ashfaq Kolachi, Maula Bakhsh Barfat, Noor Mohammad Brohi and Ahmed Khan. They were being held in connection with the Bhopali murder case.

Sadiq Umrani invited me to a welcome meal. He told me that this was not his first arrest. He was a veteran of eight arrests and had been tortured many times. His relatives had also been punished because of him. His old uncle Haji Khan Umrani and his brothers Mohd Afghan, Mehr Ali and Mohammad Ali had been arrested and lodged in Sibi Cantonment, where they were subjected to torture and intensive interrogation.

"This time they got me on the false case of murder. I was interrogated for a whole month and beaten with lathis and lashes. They wouldn't let me sleep. I was administered electric shocks. I was taken from here to the Baldia Torture Cell where military intelligence and the CID gave me the first degree treatment.'

'I have always worked for the peasants in Nasirabad. I believe in the PPP manifesto. I ran foul of the Sardars of my area. Zafarullah Jamali became my sworn enemy. In December 1981 I was picked up and kept in Quetta Cantonment. There I was tortured for six months by military personnel. I was constantly in fetters. My body was pock-marked with cigarette burns.'

He showed me his thigh which still bore the unmistakable signs of man's brutality to man.

'I was not allowed any visitors.'

Sadiq Umrani was sentenced to six years Rigorous Imprisonment by a military Court in 1985. He delivered a historic statement in the court and raised slogans against martial law. He boycotted the proceedings. His bravery and passion for the cause he had espoused were exemplary. One of the accused in the Bhopali case was a tailor called Ahmed Khan. His

crime was that he had stitched Ayaz Samoon's clothes!! He lived and worked in Pakistan Chowk and was the sole bread winner of his family. He was under investigations for 20 days and was repeatedly tortured.

The AIG Crime Branch had asked Ahmad Khan to pay him Rs. 50,000. The poor tailor was unable to pay the bribe and hence suffered.

When Masroor Ahsan was brought to Karachi Jail from Lahore he was in a state. He was unshaven and his hair had grown. The young activist looked like an old man.

Masroor and two of his comrades were arrested in Dubai in March 1983 and flown to Rawalpindi in a special aircraft. They were kept in chains for over eight months and were interrogated by the ISI top brass at the services head quarters. Their vails were ripped out one by one. Their hair was pulled out. Electric shock treatment was given to them. They went through the complete range of torture methods. They were then sent to the dungeons at the Lahore Fort. This notorious prison still echoes with the screams of countless political activists, many anonymous and forgotten. Masroor and his comrades were once again given the full treatment for over six months. You would see it in the lines on his face and in his hunted eyes.

He was then sent to Kot Lakhpat and lodged in the death cell for two months. No visitors were allowed.

I identified with Masroor. We were both implicated in a similar type of conspiracy case. The case was based on an FIR lodged at the Ferozabad Thana FIR No: 389/81. A few numbers that changed our lives. The others implicated were Shareef Brohi, Mumtaz Lashari, Mustafa Baloch, Agha Ashfaq, Hanif Patel and Rukhsar Querishi.

In Ward No. 17 of the KCJ were lodged some Palestinian prisoners. These youngsters Hisham, Ayad and Mohd were students. They were arrested at the instructions of the Israelis. Their university degrees were taken away from them by the Zia regime. Yaser Arafat had personally requested Zia to release the boys but to no avail. Zia's replies were typical of his style. They were unadulterated lies told with a straight face. Ayaz Samoon, that unfortunate young man who was hanged in 1985 was also lodged in KCJ. He was kept in a death cell.

A special Military Court conducted his case within the jail premises. He was always taken in front of his interlocutors in chains.

Ayaz was always calm and full of inner strength. The never once showed fear or lost hope. When he was led to the gallows he kept on raising slogans against General Zia and expressing his passion for his martyred leader, Mr. Bhutto. On his last night he sent me greetings through a guard. I was moved by this gesture, from a man who was about to walk his last few steps towards death.

In July Rafiq Safi arrived to take his LLB examinations.

In October 1984, Dr. Zafar Arif, a leading intellectual and professor at Karachi University was arrested and brought to the KCJ. He was personally accused by the Governor of Sind of spreading subversive thoughts amongst his students. Dr. Arif wrote a reply to the Governor in which he refuted the allegations in a marvellous manner. He was instantly and unceremoniously sacked. He was picked up that night and sent to prison where he was kept with common criminals. He was shifted to B-class after four months. He shared a cell with Sadiq Umrani.

Dr. Arif started classes on Philosophy. He was interested in political discussions and enjoyed a good argument. He spent a lot of his time reading and writing. Sometimes both of us would exercise our minds across the chess board.

In Nov. 1984, I was appearing for my Arabic exams. Nasser Baluch was also taking his under literature exams. He was handed a chit while still solving a problem. He had been summoned to the office along with Saifullah Khalid, Eisa Baloch, Malik Ayub, Rasul Baksh Lahuti. We knew that the verdict of the Hijack case was to be announced. I finished my paper as fast as I could and leaded back to the barracks. A prisoner told me that the special Military Court had sentenced Nasser Baluch, Saifullah, Eisa and Ayub, to death. I rushed to my ward. I found it deserted. All the political prisoners were in ward 22. I got there. There was strange feeling of terror that permeated the air. It was mixed with anger.

When the leaders were being led to the death cell, Sadiq Umrani made it to a vantage point with great difficulty.

'The would be martyrs walked with their heads held high. They flashed 'V' for Victory signs,' said Sadiq Umrani.

The prison was in mourning. Everyone was affected. The noose was clearly visible to all of us. These were our comrades. We had eaten together. Now they were waiting for the rope to tighten around their necks. The food stuck in our throats. Major Lodhi and other military officers visited the prison regularly. They would often inspect the hangman's noose. When news of this macabre inspection reached us we felt sick in over guts. We knew what it meant. Shareef Gadani and three gang members were also despatched to the gallows with great haste by the military authorities. We were all mortally afraid of such an eventuality. We were all involved in cases that could lead to execution. My case had still not come up. The military court had announced its verdict in the Lala Asad case. Wali Mohd Sehto was sentenced to 50 years, Rukhsar Qureshi to 14 and Rubina Qureshi and Ramzan Mughal to four years each. Rubina and Ramzan had been released in lieu of the time spent prior to sentence.

However fourteen days after their release they were rearrested. The presiding colonel wrote that they had been released due to a mistake. They would have to serve out their sentences regardless of how much time had lapsed since their detention. This is the law according to the military which was governing in the name of Islam. Whims had replaced the law of the land. Arrest whom your like, release whom you please. Flog the people, send them to the gallows. They were not accountable to anyone. The way they behaved and stunted about, it appeared as though they had forgotten about the Day of Judgement, when all accounts will have to be settled.

When Ijaz Dalmia was summoned to appear in front of the military court, we had a tearful parting. He was chained and led away. No one knew whether or not we would see him alive again. We watched him go in. He came out raising slogans of "Jeeye Bhutto' and 'Down with the military regime'. He told us with joy that he was sentenced to 14 years R.I.! fourteen years in jail and the man is overjoyed. Such was the terror that pervaded the jail. Relative, everything is relative.

The Jam Saqi case was also heard and a verdict was passed. Sohail Sangi and Amar Lal were given 5 years. Shabir Shar and Kamal Durrani got seven years. Jam Saqi's sentence was withheld. These leaders also raised slogans for the restoration of democracy and an favour of revolution after hearing the verdict. It requires great strength of character and convictions to do so.

In December 1985, just before the so called Referendum of Zia, Iqbal Haider, Fatehyab Ali Khan, Rafi Munir, Mohd. Hussain Dhanji and Amir Haider Kazmi were sent to the KCJ. They were held here for ten days. The leaders of the DSF, Imdad Chandio, Mohd. Khan Solangi and Sher Mohd Mangrio organised a political rally in Ward No.15, which was in honour of Fatehyab.

Solangi met Fatehyab and requested him to attend the meeting and make a speech about the prevailing political situation. Fatehyab dithered. He told Solangi that he was nervous about the presence of CID informers amongst the prisoners. He declined the invitation to attend the meeting. The case of the reluctant guest of honour!

Solangi was furious. Political meetings were banned in the jail but the prisoners defied the ban. He told Fatehyab, 'Khan Sahib just listen to this story and they decide: There once was a man who told his wife to wake him up bright and early as he was going on a tiger hunt. All night he boasted about his prowess. Early morning he was awakened, he had breakfast, cleaned his gun, bathed and set out. A couple of hours later the wife went out and found him standing at the edge of the forest. When she asked him why he as not amongst the tigers he blamed it on his reluctant dog who was repressing to enter the fray.

In January 1985, two prominent leaders of the JUI, Hakim Jamaluddin and Maulana Binori alongwith the Tehrik's Khawaja Himayun and PSF's Ishaq, Shafqat Bhutto and Maqbool Channa were lodged in the KCJ. They had tried to lead a procession from the Quaid's Mazar on the 25 December. They were initially held at Ferozeabad and Brigade Thanas.

Hakim Sahib was diabetic, but never let his health affect his conviction. Khawaja Humayun hindered an unqualified apology and was soon out.

Sathi Ishaq and Channa spent four months in jail.

Rafi Munir was also there for his anti referendum stance. He was a good humoured person and spent his time in prison with a smile on his face.

He was full of anecdotes and kept the prisoners in good cheer. He was summoned by the DMLA Major General Afzal to sign an apology. Rafi Munir refused.

Iqbal Haider of the QMA, was very popular amongst the prisoners. He was out of the few political leaders who focussed on the plight of political prisoners. He was constantly arranging press conferences on the subject. He had been successful in bringing the facts about torture and the general condition of prisoners to the surface through press reports.

Iqbal Haider was however, not so popular with the jail authorities. He was singled out for relatively harsher treatment then his comrades. He was not allowed visitors. He was not allowed to visit the Mari.

In December 1984 Iqbal Haider had addressed the political prisoners in Ward No.22. He had analysed the political situation for their benefit. He was the restless soul of the jail.

In February 1985, just prior to the partyless elections the jail filled up again. Iqbal Haider, Mahmood-ul-Haq Usmani, Musheer Pesh Imam, Ahmed Ali Soomro, Fatehyab Ali Khan, N.D. Khan, Qazi Ghani, Rahim Baluch, Qadir Baksh Solangi, Mohd. Hussain Dhanji, Aquil Lodhi were arrested and sent to the KCJ.

Usmani invited all the political prisoners to the special ward. After the meal, he briefed us about the Abbotabad meeting of the MRD leaders. He also spoke on the success of the Sindh Unity Board. Usmani was an old man and despite his failing health was full of hope. He wanted us to agitate for the commutation of death sentences of four of our comrades.

On the second week of February I fell seriously ill. I was sent to the jail hospital. My fellow patients included Mulla Raees Alam and the infamous 'Satha King' Aslam Natha who were 'patients' for a fat fee. They gambled all day and drank till late at night. They listened to old Indian songs on a tape recorder and would go into ecstasy at the cheap lyrics. They had contested elections. They fell out with Zahida Zaidi. They were Zia supporters.

It was rumored that they had paid the superintendent Rs.50,000 and the jail doctor Rs.30,000 to retain the
privileges of staying in the hospital.
I was not recovering from my illness. The doctor recommended my immediate transfer to the Jinnah Hospital but the prison authorities procrastinated. Iqbal Haider, Fatehyab, Musheer Pesh Imam, Ahmed Ali Soomro, Dr. Arif, Rafiq Safi, Masroor Ahsan and Sadiq Umrani served the authorities with an ultimatum. They said that if I was not shifted to the Hospital the very next day they would go on a hunger strike.
I stopped taking my medication in protest.
On the 21 February I am driven to the Jinnah Hospital in a closed car. I am taken to the Psychiatrist Ward. I am told that the head of this section, Dr. Zaki Hasan is on leave.
Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed, the Night Incharge examines me. He is the General Secretary of the PMA. I am admitted.
The guards are still being vicious. They visit on keeping me handcuffed.
The doctors and nurses are obviously sympathisers. Professor Haroon is especially concerned. He conducts a series of lists to ascertain the cause of my ailment.
A month later Dr. Zaki Hasan arrives. He conducts a complete check-up.
The nurses on duty were exceptionally kind to me. I can never forget Sister Elizabeth, Sareena Chand, Neelam, Elizabeth Anwar, Shahida, Yasmeen and Parveen. Amongst the doctors I am eternally indebted to are Dr. Akbar Khawaja, Dr. Imtiaz, Dr. Mansoor, Dr. Shahid Qureishi. Professor Jamal Naqvi is also under treatment in the same ward.
The Cops are all around. Many in civies. They move about and make me feel uncomfortable. Like a caged animal on display is some strange zoo. The psychiatrists were right in saying that my stint in prison and the torture. I had undergone had acted like a slow spreading stain. My mind was now clearly loitering near the abyss of lunacy.
The General Secretary of the Awami Tehreek, Rasul Bakhsh Paleejo is also a patient at the psychiatric ward. Whenever he came to the ward he would visit me. He was a very sick man with multiple ailments. One of his ailments was mysterious. He felt cold all the time. He was unable to eat anything except bland, boiled meat and potatoes. He has been in prison from 1979. He was lodged in Kot Lakhpat for three years in solitary. I would also visit him in the special ward.
He would meet me with great fervor. He would be under many blankets but would embrace me. He was always full of hope and conviction. He spoke very well and this insights were startling. He spoke of revolutions, Vietnam and the Chinese experience. He was obviously well read and argued his

case very well. He could parade hundreds of examples to support his viewpoint.

He was always trying to help people in distress. He had a brilliant legal mind and when he spoke about the law you could not help but feel dazzled by his erudition.

His political ideas were extremely well thought out. He was charismatic in the real sense of the word.

I would visit him along with a guard each day. We would have delightful conversations. Sometimes we would sit in the lawns and discuss the country's politics.

Haroon Ahmed an old Muslim Leaguer was also imprisoned. He was under treatment at the special ward. Professor Jamal Naqvi also joined us.

We were all fed up with our guards who were bent upon making our stay at the hospital unbearable.

In December 1985 Martial Law was lifted and my case was transferred to a civil court.

The Civil Court No.6 Karachi East ordered my release on bail. I posted Rs. 25,000. The JUI leaders Hakim Jamaluddin, Qari Sher Afzal, Maulana Abdur Razzak Aziz, Maulana Sher Mohd. Chaudhry, Mohd. Hashim were the first to congratulate me on my release.

On the 15th of February my guard was removed. I was discharged from Hospital on the 20th.

I would still have to undergo weekly check ups. However, I was now free.

When I stepped out of the hospital gates, I felt, disoriented and lost. I wondered why I was free. I looked around for my guards. I was astonished to see people walking about without any guards or surveillance. I stood there alone. Crossing the road was a major task. I was upset at the indifference of the crowds. Did they not know that I had suffered for them?

I thought back. My mind raced back five years. This was my first visit outside Karachi.

I had so many friends. Today I was alone, vertually. All my ties had been severed. I was unsure of the crowds I saw walking about oblivious of my presence. I feet let down and jilted.

At the end of February I visited my parents in my ancestral village. This was a moving experience. I broke down.

Even today, my nights are infested with night mares. I wake in cold sweat. I looked around for the guards and those vicious eyes that tortured me.

It then dawns in me that I am now free. But am I really? Is my country truly free?

" The city slept. A few cars drove past, oblivious of the drama that had overtaken my life. The police jeep was now nearing the office of the crime branch Sindh. It arrived. I was hauled out and taken to an office "

" Till August 1983 I have known of countless prisoners who have been flogged. We are not allowed to witness the floggings but can hear the sound of canes on bare skin and the piercing screams that follow "

" Suddenly about ten armed policemen carrying riot shields enter the ward. They are led by Deputy Bhungio. I am asked to step outside my barrack. A policeman flings me to the ground. I am ruthlessly beaten with shoes. My head goes into a spin. I begin to scream. My skin has been ripped off. I am bleeding "

Maulana Javed Nomani, 32, was born in a small village, Hujjan, to the south of Sargodha wher his parents came to settle from East Punjab after the partition of India. His father Rao Abdul Jabbar, a middle-class peasant, is a well-known political worker of the locality. In 1977 he contested the provincial assembly polls as a candidate of the Jamiat-Ulamae Islam (JUI).

Javed Nomani got his primary education from the local village school and later went to Sargodha High School. His normal studies were, however, discontinued when he shifted to Madressa-e-Arabia Islamia, Burewala, for religious education. He came to Karachi in 1977 to continue his studies in Jamia Uloom-e-Islamia, Binauri Town, where he was inducted in the struggle that was raging against the military dictatorship of General Ziaul Haque. As Zia cracked down harshly on the democratic forces, Maulana Nomani went into exile in Kabul. On his return in 1983, he was arrested at Karachi airport, from where this book takes the reader into his ordeal over the next three years.

I am pleased at your decision to present before the Pakistani nation and the world community an account of your experience of torture cells in a military dictatorship.
In the last 9 years, hundreds of workers of the Pakistan Peoples' Party, as well as others committed to democracy, have been subjected to great torment.
Your book gives a voice to their anguish and fulfils an urgent need of the people, political workers and parties.
I pray for the success of your struggle for peace, freedom and prosperity of the country.

– Benazir Bhutto

Your book has rekindled memories of the historic struggle of the ulemas of the sub-continent.
I am confident that the account of your struggle will be a source of inspiration for the workers of the Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam.
Your crusade for righteousness and your fortitude are exemplary.

– Maulana Fazlur Rehman

پڙهندڙ نَسُل . پَ نَ

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾ عبدالله حسين ” اُداس نسلين“ نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻِڪَ ”لُڙهندَڙ نَسُل“ نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ ئي لکيو:

انڌي ماءُ ڄڻيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻارَ
ايندڙ نسل سَمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڙا ٻارَ

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اُداس، لُڙهندَڙ، ڪَڙهندڙ، ڪُڙهندڙ، ٻَرندڙ، چُرندڙ، ڪِرَندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪَندَڙُ، ياڙي، ڪاٺو، ياجوڪَڙُ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وِڙهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سَگهجي ٿو، پَر اسان اِنهن سيني وِچان ”پڙهندڙ“ نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان کڻي ڪمپيوٽر جي دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعني e-books ناهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڌڻ، ويجهَڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻِئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاريِ تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻِڻَ جي آسَ رکون ٿا.

پَڙهندڙ نَسل (پَـنَ) ڪا بہ تنظيمَ ناهي. اُنَ جو ڪو بہ صدر، عُهديدار يا پايو وِجهندڙ نہ آهي. جيڪڏهن ڪو بہ شخص اهڙي دعوىٰ ڪري ٿو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو ڪُوڙو آهي. نہ ئي وري پَنَ جي نالي ڪي پئسا گڏ ڪيا ويندا. جيڪڏهن ڪو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري ٿو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو بہ ڪُوڙو آهي.

جهڙيءَ طَرَح وڻن جا پَنَ ساوا، ڳاڙها، نيرا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اهڙيءَ طرح پڙهندڙ نَسُل وارا پَنَ بہ مختَلِف آهن ۽ هوندا. اُهي ساڳئي ئي وقت اُداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، بَرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وِڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ بہ ٿي سگهن ٿا. بين لفظن ۾پَنَ کا خُصوصي ۽ تالي لڳل کِلَب Exclusive Club نہ آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي تہ پَنَ جا سڀ ڪَم ڪار سَهڪاري ۽ رَضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي تہ ڪي ڪم اُجرتي بنيادن تي بہ ٿِين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پَنَ پاڻ هِڪَبِئي جي مدد ڪَرڻ جي اُصولَ هيٺ ڏي وَٺُ ڪندا ۽ غيرتجارتي non-commercial رهندا. پَنَ پاران ڪتابن ڪي ڊِجيِٽائِيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عَملَ مان ڪو بہ مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نہ ڪئي ويندي.

ڪتابن ڪي ڊِجيِٽائِيز ڪرڻ کان پو ٻيو اهم مرحلو وِرهائڻ distribution جو ٿيندو. اِهو ڪم ڪرڻ وارن مان جيڪڏهن ڪو پيسا ڪمائي سگهي ٿو تہ ڀلي ڪمائي، رُڳو پَنَ سان اُن جو ڪو بہ لاڳاپو نہ هوندو.

پَنَ ڪي ڪُليل اڪرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي تہ هو وَسَ پٽاندڙ وڏِ ڪان وَڏِ ڪتاب خريد ڪَري ڪتابن جي ليکَڪَن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي هِمٿائِن. پر ساڳئي وقت عِلم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ ڪي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪَنهن بہ رُڪاوٽَ ڪي نہ مڃن.

شيخ اَيازَ علمَ، چاڻَ، سمجهہَ ۽ ڏاهپَ کي گيتَ، بيتَ، سِٽَ، پُڪارَ سان تَشبيهہ ڏيندي انهن سيني کي بَمن، گولين ۽ بارودَ جي مدِ مقابل بيهاريو آهي. اياز چوي ٿو تہ:

گيتَ بہِ جڻ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪَرن ٿا.

... ...

جئن جئن جاڙ وڌي ٿي جَڳَ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛
ريتيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موتي مَنجهہِ پهاڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛

... ...

ڪالههَ هُيا جي سُرخ گُلن جيئن، اڄڪلهہ نيلا پيلا آهن؛
گيتَ بہِ جڻ گوريلا آهن........

... ...

هي بيتُ اَٿي، هي بَم- گولو،
جيڪي بہ ڪٽين، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين!
مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فَرَقُ نہ آ، هي بيتُ بہ بَمَ جو ساٿي آ،
جنهن رِڻ ۾ رات ڪَيا راڙا، تنهن هَڏَ ۽ چَمَ جو ساٿي آ ـ

اِن حسابَ سان اٽڪاٽائي کي پاڻَ تي اِهو سوچي مَڙهڻ تہ "هاٽي ويڙهہ ۽ عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نہ وڃايو" ناداني‌ءَ جي نشاني آهي.

پَنَن جو پڙهڻ عام ڪِتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رُڳو نِصابي ڪتابن تائين محدود نہ هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج ۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر ڪڇي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي پاليسيون policies اٽڪاٽن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پَنَ نِصابي ڪتابن سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ بين

ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بنائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پَڙهندڙ نَسُل جا پَنَ سيني کي **چوءِ چالاءِ ۽ ڪينئن** جهڙن سوالن کي هر بَيانَ تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوشَ ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جوابَ ڳولڻ کي نہ رڳو پنهنجو حق، پر فرض ۽ اٽل گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ وڌ کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان بہ پڙهڻ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي اِن سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا. بَس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏِسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

> وڻ وڻ کي مون ڀاڪي پائي چيو تہ ”منهنجا ڀاءُ
> پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پَنَ پَنَ جو پڙلاءُ“.
> - اياز (ڪلهي پاتم ڪينرو)